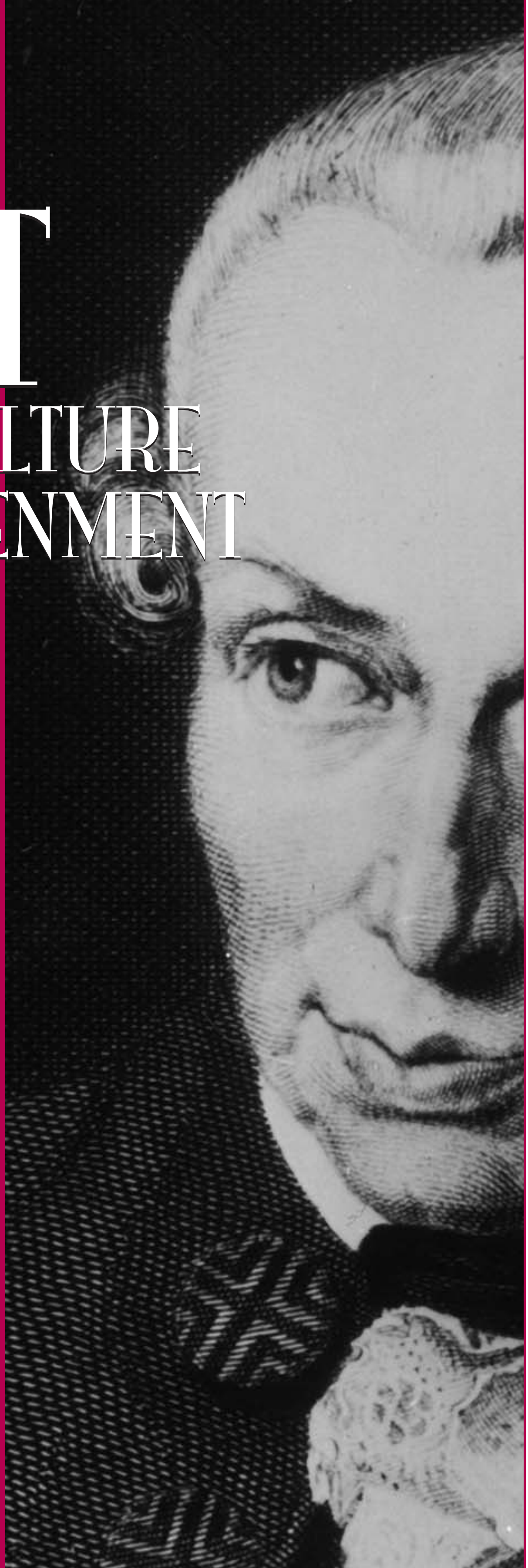
KANT AND THE CULTURE OF ENLIGHTENMENT



KATERINA DELIGIORGI

Kant

and the Culture of Enlightenment

SUNY series in Philosophy

George R. Lucas Jr., editor

Kant
and the Culture of Enlightenment

Katerina Deligiorgi

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Note on the Texts Used

For Kant, reference to the collected works in German is given to the volume (indicated by Roman numeral) and page number of the Akademie edition: *Kants gesammelte Schriften*: *herausgegeben von der Deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (formerly *Königlichen Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*), in twenty-nine vols. Berlin and Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter (formerly Georg Reimer), 1902–.

For Diderot, reference to the French is given to the volume and pages of the collected works *Denis Diderot Oeuvres Complètes*, under the general editorship of H. Dieckmann and J. Varloot, in twenty-five vols. Paris: Hermann, 1990–. For Rousseau, reference to the French is given to the volume and pages of the Pléiade edition, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau Oeuvres Complètes*, under the general editorship of B. Gagnebin and M. Raymond, Pléiade edition, in six vols. Paris: Gallimard, 1969. For Schiller, reference to the collected works in German is given to the volume and pages of the Nationalausgabe edition (*NA*), *Schillers Werke Nationalausgabe*, under the general editorship of Lieselotte Blumenthal and Benno von Wiese, in twenty-six vols. Weimar: Hermann Böhlhaus Nachfolger, 1943–.

List of Abbreviations

Kant

Anthropology: *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Perspective*, trans. Mary Gregor, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974.

CB: "Conjectures on the Beginning of Human History," trans. H. B. Nisbet, in *Kant's Political Writings*, Hans Reiss (ed.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

CF: "The Contest of Faculties. Part Two: The Conflict between the Faculty of Philosophy and the Faculty of Law," in *Kant's Political Writings*.

CJ: *Critique of Judgement*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar, Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987.

CPR: *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith, London: Macmillan, 1964.

CPrR: *Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. Lewis White Beck, Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merill, 1977.

ET: "The End of All Things," trans. Lewis White Beck, in *Immanuel Kant: On History*, Lewis White Beck (ed.), Indianapolis and New York: Hackett, 1963.

GW: *Groundwork of Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. H. J. Paton, as *The Moral Law*, London: Hutchinson, 1953.

IUH: "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose," in *Kant's Political Writings*.

Logic: *Logic* (the G. B. Jäsche edition), trans. J. Michael Young, *Immanuel Kant: Lectures on Logic*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

MM: *Metaphysics of Morals*, including "The Doctrine of Right" and "The Doctrine of Virtue," tran. Mary Gregor, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

PP: "Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch," in *Kant's Political Writings*.

Religion: *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, trans. Theodore M. Greene and Hoyt H. Hudson, New York: Harper and Row, 1960.

RH: "Reviews of Herder's *Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind*," in *Kant's Political Writings*.

TP: "On the Common Saying: 'This May Be True in Theory, But It Does Not Apply in Practice,'" in *Kant's Political Writings*.

WE: "An Answer to the Question, "What Is Enlightenment?" in *Kant's Political Writings*.

WO: "What Is Called Orientation in Thinking?" in *Kant's Political Writings*.

Diderot

Enc: Diderot's articles for the *Encyclopédie* including the 1750 "Prospectus" from the Dieckmann Varloot edition of the collected works.

Oeuvres Politiques: Paul Vernière (ed.), *Oeuvres Politiques de Diderot*, Paris: Garnier, 1963.

RN: "Rameau's Nephew," trans. Leonard Tancock, in *Rameau's Nephew and D'Alembert's Dream*, Harmondsworth: Penguin,1966.

Refutation: Refutation of "De l'esprit," P. Vernière (ed.), *Oeuvres Philosophiques de Diderot*, Paris: Garnier, 1956.

Salon I: "The Salon of 1765," trans. J. Goodman, in *Diderot on Art I: The Salon of 1765*, including the "Notes on Painting," New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995.

Salon II: "The Salon of 1767," trans. J. Goodman, in *Diderot on Art II: The Salon of 1767*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995.

Rousseau

Discourse I: "Discourse on the Sciences and Arts," trans. Roger and Judith Masters, in *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: The First and Second Discourses*, Roger Masters (ed.), New York: St. Martin's, 1964.

Discourse II: "Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among Men," trans. Roger and Judith Masters, in *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: The First and Second Discourses*, Roger Masters (ed.), New York: St. Martin's, 1964.

Émile: *Émile, or On Education*, trans. Alan Bloom, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1989.

SC: *The Social Contract*, trans. G. D. H. Cole, in *The Social Contract and Discourses*, London: Everyman, 1963.

Mendelssohn

WHA: "Über die Frage: 'Was heisst aufklären?'" in Alexander Altmann (ed.), *Gesammelte Schriften Jubiläumausgabe*, VI:1, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Friedrich Frommann (formerly: Günther Holzboog), 1972.

Reinhold

Gedanken: "Gedanken über Aufklärung," in *Der Teutsche Merkur*, vol. 3, 1784.

Schiller

AE: *On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters*, trans. Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L. A. Willoughby, Oxford: Clarendon, 1982.

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Introduction

A Critical Answer to the Question, What Is Enlightenment?

This book presents an argument about Kant that can also be read as an interpretation of a particular Enlightenment project. Kant's philosophy belongs to an intellectual context in which the meaning, orientation, and possible limits of "enlightenment" were the subject of intense debate. Kant sought to answer the increasingly pressing questions concerning the theoretical underpinnings and practical consequences of philosophical criticism by construing rational enquiry itself as a form of self-criticism. He consequently defines enlightenment not in terms of rational certitudes, but rather in terms of the freedom to engage in public argument. Through an account of what I term a "culture of enlightenment," Kant describes a social ideal that is rooted in, but at the same time represents an advance on, the earlier Enlightenment ideal of intellectual independence. By approaching Kant's thought from the perspective of its social and cultural commitments, I seek to formulate a cohesive account that does not succumb to the limitations of a reductively formalist interpretation. At the same time, by tracing the critical and self-reflective strands that are internal to it, I hope to provide a plausible alternative to revisionist accounts of Enlightenment thinking.

I start from the assumption that the question, what is enlightenment? posed over two centuries ago by German *Aufklärer*, remains a live question for us today. In asking it, we do not simply seek to satisfy our curiosity for a period of European intellectual history. We look, rather, to discover "what is still at stake when we argue about 'enlightenment,'" or, perhaps, more hesitantly, "what's left of enlightenment?"[1]

But why, we might ask, does "enlightenment" remain in continuing need of clarification? The simple answer, as Michel Foucault claimed in the early eighties, is that the "event that is called *Aufklärung* . . . has determined, at least in part, what we are, what we think, and what we do today."[2] The question, what is enlightenment? is Janus-faced, directed both at the present and at the past. In this book, I seek to sustain this double perspective. Although in providing an answer, I turn to Kant and to debates conducted in the latter half of the eighteenth century, I hope to show that the solutions put forward remain live options for us today. This book is therefore both a contribution to an ongoing argument about the legacy of the Enlightenment and an investigation of the relevance of this legacy to our current political and philosophical concerns.

But is it not already too much to speak of a "legacy" or an "inheritance"? Lawrence Klein has argued that this "metaphorical array"—within which he includes Foucault's own, circumspect use of the term "genealogy"—is "an invitation to anachronism because it interprets aspects of the past by reference to what they are alleged to have led to."[3] The point is well taken: present-centered approaches to the Enlightenment can be not only historically naïve but also philosophically obtuse. In a different context, David Charles has observed that if the historian of philosophy takes "what is currently fashionable as the sole criterion of what is philosophically important or worthwhile...she is working not too much but too little as a philosopher."[4] But to pose the question, what is enlightenment? is precisely to initiate a process of reflection about our philosophical as well as our historical assumptions. Indeed, if we are to pay close attention to historical context as Klein urges us to do, then we must also acknowledge the present historical context in which enlightenment becomes a question for us today. This context is informed by the self-image of contemporary Western culture as, for good or ill, the inheritor culture of the Enlightenment. I say "for good or ill" because the value of this inheritance is a matter of fierce contestation. In these competing assessments what is presented as philosophically important or worthwhile is set programmatically against a particular diagnosis of our inherited gains and ills. While some authors continue to view enlightenment as a process of emancipation from the external authority of church and state, and as a discovery of the "inner light" of reason, others focus on the Enlightenment's "shadows," identifying destructive consequences that are still felt today. The advanced procedures for the "domination" and "manipulation" of nature that drive contemporary technology are identified as a disastrous result of the emancipatory promise held out

by enlightened scientific reasoning.[5] The belief that social practices ought to be anchored securely on rational foundations is seen as having contributed to the depletion of vital resources for sustaining the fabric of moral and social life. More specifically, the demand that actions be judged on the basis of abstract and universalist principles is seen as having contributed to a devaluation of local, familial, and communal bonds that can function as the bases of ethical obligations. And conversely, the failure of Enlightenment thinkers to recognize the diversity of human experience in relation to race, culture, and gender has been causally related to a lack of social and political structures that can respond to the demands of a genuinely pluralistic society. In short, the prompt for enquiring into what Alasdair MacIntyre calls the "predecessor culture" is a concern for the present. For MacIntyre, an analysis of the breakdown of the Enlightenment project of "independent rational justification of morality" forms "the historical background against which the predicaments of our own culture become intelligible."[6]

Concern for the present, be it in the form of "our own culture" or, more abstractly, through reference to "modernity" as such, opens a path to the past, but at the same time blocks our access to it. The danger is that in the effort to understand ourselves through the intermediary of the Enlightenment, we turn Enlightenment into a mere abstraction.[7] Alignments vis-à-vis "*the* Enlightenment project" are often premised on an assumption that is simply false, namely, that what was a highly differentiated historical phenomenon, the boundaries of which are neither obvious nor agreed, can be reduced to a single unified pan-European project.[8] Taking an overemphatic historical stance, Lawrence Klein suggests that such global references to *the* Enlightenment have in fact no real historical object and are ultimately empty. "Enlightenment," he argues, "was not one project but an array of projects. Modernity was central to many of these projects, but this modernity was an eighteenth-century one. The labours of these people were local in a setting of immense complexity. If one speaks of 'legacies' one has to recognise that the 'legacies' of their projects are multiple, if not infinite, and, at the same time, these 'legacies' are strictly untraceable."[9] Yet Klein's perspective, with its identification of "multiple, if not infinite" projects, which take place in a "setting of immense complexity" and leave "strictly intractable" legacies, also leaves us ultimately unenlightened. This is why, despite valiant efforts to wean us off the habit of treating it as a "reified bundle of axioms,"[10] the term "Enlightenment" continues to stand as a useful shorthand for an optimistic faith in the powers of human reason to determine both our relation to nature and our relation to ourselves as political and social agents.

Where does this leave us? Are we compelled to choose between philosophical abstraction and historical *akribeia*? The present book emerges out of the conviction that it is possible to engage in productive reflection on "enlightenment" in a way that speaks to important concerns of the present without being in historical bad faith. What opens the way for this approach is the recognition that enlightenment as a *question* has its own history, a history of reflection on the meaning of the term "enlightenment," which is also a history of contestation of its prospective and actual legacies. A key moment in this history is the formulation of the question that Johann Friedrich Zöllner put to the readers of the *Berlinische Monatsschrift* in December 1783: "What is enlightenment?." "This question," Zöllner continues, "which is almost as important as what is truth, should be answered before one begins to enlighten. And yet I have never found it answered!."[11] Zöllner's question provided a focus for the debate that was already taking place in Germany about the nature and even the possible limits of *Aufklärung*. Although this debate had a primarily practical orientation, focusing on the moral and political consequences of the spread of enlightenment to the wider public, it also brought to light different views on the nature of reason, the relation between reason and freedom, and the distinction between *theoria* and *praxis*. The cluster of issues at stake in this debate ensure that the search for the meaning of enlightenment was, from the very start, both historically *and* philosophically demanding. Then as now, the attempt to account for where we are now and what we have achieved goes hand in hand with the attempt to account for what we might hope or, indeed, ought to achieve. Kant's treatment of these issues in his 1784 essay "An Answer to the Question, What Is Enlightenment?" forms the basis of the argument of this book, a central task of which is to make explicit the theoretical and practical commitments of Kant's interpretation of enlightenment as the public use of one's reason. Two things are essential here. First, we need to recognize Kant's argument as an intervention in a broader debate about reason, criticism, and public culture. Second, we need to interpret his argument within the context of his critical philosophy, as an extension of the reflective examination of the conditions of validity of our use of rational argument. My approach, therefore, is neither straightforwardly historical nor straightforwardly analytical. Rather, I develop an argument about enlightenment that is historically anchored in particular texts, debates, and practices while at the same time sufficiently timely to warrant our critical attention today.

It follows from the plural and diverse character of the Enlightenment discussed above that there is not just *one* account of

Enlightenment thinking. Accordingly this book does not present an argument about *the* Enlightenment, but rather about a particular strand of Enlightenment thinking that is often neglected in contemporary assessments of its legacy. In a recent discussion, Richard Rorty invited his readers to distinguish between two separate Enlightenment projects. The first is the political project of creating "a world without caste, class or cruelty."[12] This, he argues, is worth pursuing, for there is hope yet that "Mankind will finally escape from the thuggery of the schoolyard, put away childish things, and be morally mature."[13] The second, philosophical project, by contrast, deserves to fail, for here the goal is "to do to Nature, Reason, and Truth what the eighteenth century did to God."[14] What motivates Rorty's hostility to this second, philosophical project is the conviction that it perpetrates a philosophical misunderstanding. "For the rationalist," he maintains, "Reason has authority because Reality, the way things are in themselves, has authority."[15] The Enlightenment project that concerns me here is one that does not and indeed cannot take for granted Rorty's philosophical trinity of Nature, Reason, and Truth. Moreover, the argument developed in this book begins by addressing a form of doubt that cuts across Rorty's neat division between the philosophical and the political. To appreciate this we need to pay attention to the questions and uncertainties that remain concealed within what Kant describes as the self-reforming and intellectually emancipating "*age of criticism.*"[16]

In my reconstruction of this important first portion of the enlightenment argument, I turn initially not to Germany but to France and to the writings of Denis Diderot and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. I do so in order to explore what we may call its "skeptical premise." Diderot provides us with the fullest and most vivid account of what it is to confront the potentially corrosive or "dissolving" character of critical enquiry.[17] Diderot is a skeptic who seeks in vain to answer the skeptic's doubt. His conception of the social task of the philosopher as critic motivates an urgent search for justification for his normative insights, which however produces only negative results. Diderot thus concludes with skepticism about the very possibility of a foundationalist project of the kind described by Rorty. The shadow cast by Diderot's doubt in turn darkens Rousseau's political vision. Rousseau's so-called abandonment of philosophy is effectively an abandonment of the possibility of relying on either reason or nature as a secure foundation for political action within the state. For Rousseau, the way to form and to preserve a stable conception of the common good is through a civic education that eradicates privatized or particularistic choices, thereby ensuring cohesion and a shared view of the good. The political cost for this is the

effective depoliticization of the public domain, which remains insulated from dissent and criticism. Both Diderot and Rousseau can be seen to have grappled with the question, are there reasons that can be adduced to defend particular practices that are authoritative and hence immune to criticism? This question is both about criteria and their validity and about the possibility of creating a political context in which the destabilizing effects of dissent can be tolerated. Only once we recognize the philosophical and political dead ends to which this question leads can we begin to appreciate the originality of Kant's approach. Adopting Kant's perspective enables us to see the very question as wrongheaded—the search for reasons that are immune from criticism follows on the steps of the (ultimately self-undermining) Cartesian quest for foundations. At the heart of Kant's interpretation of enlightenment is the idea that we may have more success in our reason-giving tasks if we allow criticism to form an integral part of our reasoning. By adopting a "critical" approach to the philosophical problem of criticism, that is, by giving criticism a role in the reflective examination of rational claims, Kant is able to give the practice of criticism a legitimate role within an enlightened public culture.

If Diderot and Rousseau provide us with a skeptical introduction to the argument to come, it is the German *Aufklärer* who provide us with the key question, what is enlightenment? This ushers in what I shall term the "reflective phase" of Enlightenment. In Gernot Böhme's apt description, this is "the phase in which the Enlightenment is already becoming self-conscious."[18] *Aufklärung*—a term that can be used simply to mean "elucidation"— came to be seen as itself in need of elucidation. This is not only because there were competing interpretations of its meaning, but also because there were diverse assessments of its value and influence. These concerns set the stage for the reflective investigation of the nature, orientation, and possible limits of enlightenment undertaken in Germany both by critics and defenders of enlightenment. The two essays by Karl Leonhard Reinhold and by Moses Mendelssohn that I examine here represent two different attempts to offer a defense of enlightenment that can allay the fears of the critics. Both Reinhold and Mendelssohn endeavor to show that the regard for truth or knowledge that motivates the *Aufklärer* is compatible with respect for social order and cultural continuity. This particular historical configuration of the classical problem of the public *use* of truth, which can also be framed as the problem of reconciling social and political obligations with the demands that attach to its pursuit, takes the form of a question that defines the reflective phase of Enlightenment. The question is whether any external limits can legiti-

mately be placed on enlightenment, an activity that is internally only "limited" through reaching its self-given goal. The question of limits represents a sharpening of the question of criticism and an early call for enlightenment to account for itself.

In the reading I offer in this book, it is precisely this task that Kant confronts. To borrow one of his favorite metaphors, he sets up a tribunal of enlightenment that puts enlightenment itself on trial. On Kant's interpretation, enlightenment, which appears initially to be a primarily private pursuit, is a public process that depends on particular structures of free debate. Underpinning this interpretation is a conception of reason as a kind of norm that depends for its validity on the structured freedom and open scrutiny of communication.[19] This results in a social ideal of a self-regulating *culture* of enlightenment. Because it is neither sheltered by law nor secured through habit, such a culture remains very fragile. I shall argue, however, that this fragility is not the result of inattention on Kant's part, or of failing to provide sufficient safeguards, but rather the sobering outcome of the tribunal of enlightenment itself: a rational culture can neither be taken for granted nor, unless it is to negate itself, assume the rigid forms of what Kant calls "dictatorial authority."

The themes of public reason and communication that I explore in this book are much in evidence in contemporary philosophy. It is therefore worth dwelling on the connections and differences between Kant's interpretation of these ideas and their contemporary instantiations. The most obvious connections are with the work of Jürgen Habermas and John Rawls, both of whom pursue a reconstructive project similar to the one outlined here. There are, however, important differences. The emphasis on communication in Habermas's work since the early 1970s reflects an ongoing concern with the reflective and critical functions of public argument that is already to be found in his study on the *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* of 1962.[20] In this work, Habermas traces the emergence in the seventeenth and eighteenth century of a phenomenon "without historical precedent,"[21] which he terms a "public making use of its reason."[22] He then shows how this public domain gradually became submerged under the weight of commercial and factional interests, interests that he would later term the imperatives of money and power. His subsequent attempt to reorientate the traditional "philosophy of consciousness" to a "communicative paradigm" can be seen as an attempt to recuperate the critical and reflective functions of the public sphere by placing them within a new framework of mutual understanding that is structured around the idea of a linguistic formation of consensus.[23] Importantly, however, despite clear

Kantian references, Habermas draws mainly on the American Pragmatist tradition rather than on Kant. Kant's conception of the public use of reason presents us with a less cumbersome model of social interaction that is unburdened by the regulative *telos* of consensus. Kant starts with a conception of reason that is already normative, arguing that if reason is to be authoritative, it must be autonomous, and if it is to be autonomous, it must be free. As a result, the character of a culture of enlightenment is essentially agonistic and dynamic. This is because it is through disagreement and criticism that we make clear to ourselves our implicit normative commitments and are able to stake our membership in a potentially universal culture of enlightenment. Making public use of one's reason is always at the same time a *testing* of the boundaries of interpretation of the principles that shape this culture.

A similar point can be made with respect to Rawls's conception of public reason, which, in his later work, is presented as a component of political liberalism.[24] By "public reason," however, Rawls does not understand a mode of argument as Kant does. Rather, for Rawls, public reason embodies the shared fund of beliefs and the shared reason of the citizens of a democratic polity that is concerned with "the good of the public and matters of fundamental justice."[25] Although Rawls claims a Kantian ancestry for his conception of public reason,[26] on closer scrutiny it turns out to be more indebted to Rousseau's model of civic identity. This becomes especially clear when he singles out as an exemplar of public reason the reason of the Supreme Court, which is the expression of —and possesses the authority of— the "will of We the people."[27] By contrast, Kant's model does not rely or presuppose any such common identity structured around ideas of "basic" and "shared" political goods. It is not accidental that Kant's examples of a public use of reason are examples of criticism, for what is at stake is the freedom to express publicly a point of view that is *different* from those that are generally accepted.

In order to show what is distinctive and compelling about Kant's idea of enlightenment, it is not sufficient merely to identify the problems it resolves. It is equally important to examine whether it gives rise to new problems of its own. The argument I present, therefore, cannot be completed without itself undergoing critical test. This test has a historical dimension insofar as Kant's interpretation of enlightenment was subjected to critical scrutiny by his contemporaries, among them Johann Georg Hamann and Friedrich Schiller. Schiller, whose arguments I examine in detail, is an especially useful interlocutor because he raises concerns that are both plausible and representative of the immediate reception of Kant's ideas, pointing toward the Idealist abandon-

ment of the "secure path" of critical philosophy. In a recent study tracing the immediate aftermath of philosophy "after Kant," Karl Ameriks argues that even Kant's disciples and popularizers, such as Reinhold, contributed to a distortion of his ideas. Though historically significant, this development must be seen as a philosophical "regress," Ameriks claims, for it represents a renunciation of the "fallibilistic" and modest framework of critical philosophy.[28] Although my reconstruction also stresses the fallibilistic elements of Kant's interpretation of enlightenment, I do not share Ameriks's negative assessment of "philosophy after Kant." The interpretation presented here owes a great deal to Kant's earliest critics, who raised concerns about what they saw as his arid rationalism, his ahistoricism, and his neglect of culture. There is also much to be learned from Kant's twentieth-century critics, who raise more general concerns about enlightenment, rational agency, and the presuppositions of critique. The arguments of those who remain dissatisfied by what is revealed in Cassirer's "bright mirror" of Enlightenment provide an important voice of dissent that constantly renews the call to critical self-reflection. The question, what is enlightenment? cannot continue to remain "live" without the challenges posed by the critics of enlightenment.

The book comprises five chapters, each of which forms a different stage in an unfolding argument. The first chapter fulfils a largely introductory function and sets out the premises of the enlightenment argument I develop in the main part of the book. It establishes the wider historical and philosophical context for the project of an "enlightened" criticism of the Enlightenment as this is developed in France and in Germany toward the latter half of the eighteenth century. The first two sections examine the ramifications of the question of criticism in the work of Diderot and Rousseau. I am especially interested in the difficulties they encounter in seeking to reconcile radical social and political criticism with their defense of substantive normative commitments. Having diagnosed a discrepancy between the reality of the society in which they lived and the complacent description of this society as "enlightened," both authors raise searching questions about the promise of increasing human fulfillment and of political and social emancipation held out by Enlightenment ideas. However, I argue that Diderot ultimately fails to account for his own critical standpoint and that he is unable to provide a coherent defense of his own position. His legacy is one of profound skepticism about the possibility of justifying our moral, political, or aesthetic choices. This skepticism informs Rousseau's pessimistic view of the capacities of unaided reason to determine the good. It is also the source of the highly ambiguous character of his political

vision. With the question of criticism thus remaining unanswered, I turn, in the final section of the chapter, to issues raised within the German debate on Enlightenment, focusing on Reinhold and Mendelssohn. Responding to worries about its political and social consequences, both authors offer a defense of Enlightenment while at the same time admitting that certain limits must be imposed on the dissemination of its ideas. Although their treatment of the question of limits proves inadequate, their work is crucial for understanding the characteristic concerns of the "reflective phase" of the German Enlightenment. With this portion of the argument in place, we are in position to appreciate the advantages of Kant's approach. Kant's claims do not appear as if "shot from a pistol" but as a resolution to a set of problems.

In chapter 2, I offer a detailed analysis of Kant's interpretation of enlightenment by focusing on his essay "An Answer to the Question, What is Enlightenment?" while also drawing from other works, especially the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* and the *Lectures on Logic*. Kant gives a deceptively simple answer to the question. Enlightenment, he writes, consists in the freedom in all matters to make "public use of one's reason." As I show, however, at the basis of his idea of a public use of reason lies a conception of rational autonomy that is neither straightforward nor easy to achieve. A key step in my reconstruction of Kant's argument is the identification of two normative constraints that are implicit in the public use of reason: universalizability and publicity. Besides these formal conditions, however, Kant adds a further material condition, communication with others. Taken together, these features of public reasoning describe a model of social practice or a "culture of enlightenment." The term "culture of enlightenment" serves to make explicit the substantive commitments that flow from Kant's conception of public argument: the freedom to communicate one's thoughts and the freedom to participate in public discussion. These freedoms, in turn, vouchsafe a public sphere of argument and criticism that possesses important political functions. I show that the source of the normative constraints that underpin these freedoms is to be found not in Kant's concept of political right, but in his conception of reason itself as a self-critical and self-legislating faculty. A culture of enlightenment can be seen thus to embody a specific conception of reason whose authority is not natural but established through discursive practice.

Chapter 3 examines whether the ideal of rational autonomy set out in the previous chapter is realizable. Kant deals with the question of the realizability of our rational plans in general in the context of what he terms "philosophical history." This is especially relevant for our pre-

sent purposes since the idea of a "culture of enlightenment" describes not just a constructive, open-ended practice but also an emancipatory *process*. This process, moreover, is not the preserve of particular individuals but of the species as a whole. For Kant, this involves viewing history itself as a gradually unfolding process of emancipation. Central to the argument of this chapter is the claim that we need to view Kant's conception of historical progress as informed by his critical philosophical commitments. I argue that while a naturalistic reconstruction of Kant's claims concerning progress is both plausible and attractive, its scope is limited. In the process of tracing these limits, two important characteristics of Kant's conception of history come into focus. First, we are able to distinguish between different *kinds* of progress, including political, cultural-social, and moral progress. Once progress is no longer viewed as monolithic, we can adopt a dual perspective on history and on the goals we pursue; certain rational objectives can be viewed as historically realizable while others cannot. I argue that political and cultural-social aims such as the achievement of a culture of enlightenment belong to the former category, revealing an emphatically "this-worldly"[29] aspect of Kant's philosophy. Secondly, we can see that Kant's conception of history is firmly rooted in the perspective of the individual agent who seeks to further her rational aims. This agent-centered perspective foregrounds the practical interest that shapes philosophical history. For Kant, a progressive conception of history is a necessary corollary to our practical rational commitments since it enables us to view these commitments as realizable by beings like ourselves.

Chapter 4 engages with Schiller's criticisms of Enlightenment culture in general and of Kant's philosophy in particular. The principal focus here is his letters on the *Aesthetic Education of Man*, although I also discuss *Grace and Dignity* and the *Kallias* fragment. Schiller was one of the first to claim that the Enlightenment's prioritization of reason led to the oppression or "forgetting" of inner nature, that is, the domain of feelings, desires, and affects. While there are certain similarities between Schiller's arguments and those made earlier by Rousseau —as well as by German critics of Enlightenment rationalism, such as Johann Gottfried Herder— Schiller articulates a distinctive and original position that possesses powerful contemporary resonance. Beyond their obvious historical significance, his criticisms raise important philosophical questions about the very framing of the emancipatory ideals of the Enlightenment. What is especially important in the present context is that Schiller develops his argument through a close engagement with Kant's moral philosophy while also drawing upon Kant's theory of beauty and of aesthetic experience. Moreover, while he acknowledges

the centrality of Kant's ideas to his own thinking, the demand for a new approach arises out of his fundamental dissatisfaction with the Kantian model. Schiller charges Kant with representing nature as an "enemy" and with failing to recognize that we are also sensing, desiring, and feeling beings. Only by attending to these aspects of humanity, he argues, will it be possible to attain a condition of true freedom that is also one of human happiness. Schiller's concept of aesthetic education describes an ideal relation between intellect and feeling, presenting us with a goal toward which we are encouraged to strive. Although he develops his argument with force and insight, I claim that Schiller ultimately fails to offer a convincing account of this ideal. Ironically, although he accuses Kant of neglecting the embodied, sensible nature of human beings, it is Schiller who provides us with a disembodied model of social and political life.

Finally, in Chapter 5, I return to some of the larger issues broached in this introduction. I examine contemporary criticisms of the legacy of Enlightenment and consider their relation to the interpretation of enlightenment that I have defended here. I consider three significant challenges mounted from the perspective of critical theory, poststructuralism, and feminism. While giving due weight to these criticisms, I defend Kant's position by elucidating the key idea underlying his essentially dynamic conception of reason, namely, the idea that reason justifies itself through critical self-examination. Interpreted in this way, enlightenment is not restricted to an historical period that has now come to an end, but is still at work in the very criticism of Kant's philosophy and of the Enlightenment heritage that are considered here.

Chapter 1

The Enlightenment in Question

1. Enlightenment as an "Age of Criticism"

One of the difficulties encountered when reflecting about the Enlightenment is to determine first of all what the object is. This is not just a demand for geographical and historical precision, but also, importantly, for identifying the set of ideas under discussion, the content so to speak of the term. But therein lies the difficulty: "Enlightenment" is descriptively elusive. There is no date or concept that we can afford to take as our unproblematic, self-evident starting point. Taking our cue from the darkness-dispelling metaphor that is Enlightenment, however, we can begin by asking: How are darkness and light apportioned? How is illumination to be brought about? In terms of what we have come to view as the characteristic concerns and ambitions of the "Age of Reason," the answer to these questions is obvious: the way to secure intellectual progress and human happiness is by eradicating superstition and by setting the various branches of human knowledge on a sound scientific footing. Familiarity with the aspirations of this optimistic, progress-oriented Enlightenment, however, has tended to obscure a strand of eighteenth-century thinking that offers a more cautious view of the future and questions the nature and achievements of both "enlightenment" and "civilization." The aim of this chapter is to flesh out the questions this critical Enlightenment raises about the social and cultural context of reasoning, the reliability of reason as a guide for human action, and, finally, the nature, powers, and limitations of human rationality.

In his now classic study of the period, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, Ernst Cassirer observes that "'Reason' becomes the

unifying and central point of the century, expressing all that it longs and strives for, and all that it achieves."[1] Cassirer marks the intellectual distance that separates his own age from the Enlightenment by focusing on the concept of reason itself. He points out that while for us reason is a variable, often vague concept with a distinctive history of its own, eighteenth-century thinkers were "imbued" with the belief that reason is immutable, "the same for all thinking subjects, all nations, all epochs, all cultures."[2] The works with which I begin my discussion in this chapter, however, treat the claim that reason is immutable as *problematic*, rather than as axiomatically true. The concerns and aspirations of the critical Enlightenment examined here do not fit our preconceptions about the Age of Reason, they are more appropriately seen as representing an Age of Criticism. Cassirer too employs the term *Zeitalter der Kritik*, which he uses to describe the remarkable growth of literary and aesthetic criticism that took place during the eighteenth century. Developing an argument made originally by Alfred Baeumler,[3] Cassirer maintains that while restricted in its scope and domain of application, literary and aesthetic criticism had important consequences for the age as a whole. Art, Cassirer argues, presented a unique challenge to the "fundamental propensity of the century toward a clear and sure ordering of the details, toward formal unification and strict logical concatenation."[4] Constrained to acknowledge the existence of "an irrational element"[5] that it cannot encompass, reason is awakened to its limitations and the age of reason to the limits of its rationalistic aspirations. Although the problematic of the limits of reason is central to the works I want to examine here, Cassirer's account of its emergence is at best partial. To appreciate this, we need to broaden our view of the Age of Criticism, to encompass not only the criticism of art, but also of religion, morality, politics, philosophy, and of Enlightenment itself, that took place during the eighteenth century. This is well captured by Kant who, in the process of introducing his own project of a criticism of reason in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, observes that "Our age is, in especial degree, the *age of criticism*, and to criticism everything must submit" (*CPR* A xii). The criticism of "everything," however, presents us with a different philosophical problem than the one alluded to in Cassirer's analysis of aesthetic criticism. Cassirer's account of the encounter between reason and the irrational obscures the less dramatic, but, I will be arguing, very fruitful, *internal* questioning of reason, which ushers the Kantian thematic of a "critique" of reason. It is the conditions and themes of this internal criticism of Enlightenment reason that I want to outline in this chapter.

The philosophical questions that are raised within the critical Enlightenment are not of course free floating; they are rooted in a particular historical context. A helpful way of looking at this context is suggested by Dena Goodman in her study of the patterns of sociability and the discursive practices developed in eighteenth-century France. Goodman links the emergence of these practices to the efforts of the participants in the "Republic of Letters" to "work out a way of maintaining citizenship in the political and geographical states that define their nationality without compromising their primary allegiance to the values of the republic."[6] She points out that the "critical position of the citizen of the Republic of Letters, first articulated by Pierre Bayle at the end of the seventeenth century and then translated into the social and discursive practices of conversation and epistolarity by the *philosophes* and the *salonnières* of the Enlightenment, is a product of the tension this dual citizenship generates."[7] In this chapter I want to focus precisely on what Goodman calls here the "critical position" of the citizen of the Republic of Letters. However, my aim is not to analyze the discursive practices that this critical position generates, but rather to examine the philosophical problems it brings forth.

A clear expression of the tension of the dual citizenship Goodman describes can be found in d'Alembert's "Essai sur la societé des gens de lettres et des grands." The intellectuals, or *gens de lettres*, d'Alembert argues, find themselves occupying an odd position, for they are under obligation to remain autonomous, free among equals "in the community of men of letters," while, at the same time, they have no power to enforce the conditions under which this freedom can be realized. This predicament cannot be satisfactorily resolved because the demands of the pursuit of truth are different and possibly irreconcilable with the demands of the state or the patrons (*les grands*). Sharpening the contrast, d'Alembert concludes that "anarchy, which destroys states, on the contrary supports and maintains the republic of letters."[8] D'Alembert's text raises two sorts of questions. First, it seeks to define the social role and duties of the intellectual. As we shall see, this quest for a social justification of intellectual pursuits is central to the German debate about the nature of enlightenment and of its social and political consequences. Secondly, d'Alembert's account of the awkward social position of the *gens des lettres* raises a question about the kind of authority and legitimacy that can plausibly be claimed for intellectual pursuits, especially when these provide the basis for criticizing prevalent usage or accepted doctrine. This question can be phrased as follows: how can reason help us vindicate the legitimacy of our critical choices, if "everything" is to be subjected to criticism? The different

approaches to this problem range from Diderot's skepticism about the possibility of providing a satisfactory answer to this question, to Mendelssohn's prudential limitation of the scope of criticism. These arguments serve as a conceptual foil for Kant's interpretation of enlightenment and his own solution to the problem of criticism. Equally though, they enable us to see how criticism of traditional authority and the authority of tradition—which is an intrinsic element of the rationalist program of the Enlightenment—ultimately led to a constructive debate about the limits of this program itself.

2. Diderot, Rousseau, and the Tasks of Criticism

In his article on "Fact" in the *Encyclopédie*, Diderot writes the following: "Facts may be divided into three classes: divine acts, natural phenomena, and human actions. The first belong to theology, the second to philosophy, and the last to history properly speaking. All are equally subject to criticism" (*Enc* VII:298). Criticism of facts is central to both Diderot's and Rousseau's understanding of their philosophical tasks. As I will be arguing in this section, morally motivated social criticism forms a central part of their work and shapes the logic of their positive claims, namely, that if criticism is necessary to identify what is wrong, then what is right must be immune to criticism. In the next two sections, I will be exploring the limitations of this logic and the false trails to which it leads. Apart from providing us with a via negativa to the resolution of the problem of criticism, this exploration brings to light elements of an exemplary examination of the role of the philosopher as critic and of the normative assumptions implicit in this self-given task that can serve as a critical counterpoint to the conception of the philosopher as educator we consider in the final section of this chapter.

Before turning to examine the particular projects pursued by each author, however, I want to dwell for a moment on some shared features of their conception of philosophical authorship. As already mentioned, criticism is central to this conception. Diderot views criticism as performing an important emancipatory task: it identifies the "wrong habits" that hold us "captive" (*De la poésie dramatique*, X:331). For this reason, he suggests elsewhere, criticism must be recognized as an almost natural force like death, from which nothing escapes but "everything must bow to its law" (XIV:27, *Salon I* 6). This belief in the value of criticism is underscored by an awareness of the fragility of culture, which Diderot views as subject to the same processes of decay as those that affect the life of natural organisms. In his play "The Natural Son,"

the heroine, Constance, confidently declares: “Barbarians exist still, without doubt. But the times of barbarism are gone. The age has enlightened itself” (*Le fils naturel*, Act IV, scene iii, X:65). Yet a recurring theme in Diderot’s work is the difficulty of sustaining such an optimistic belief and the conviction that no human achievement is secure or unassailable. This is precisely why he views criticism as the best available means to resist the onset of exhaustion by identifying the “barbarians” that threaten the fragile gains of this “enlightened age.” At the same time, he is highly aware of the difficulty of carrying out this critical program. What he seeks to formulate is a critically vindicated defense for the values that he sees endangered in contemporary society. This is a pressing task for him, because in the absence of such a defense, his civic and moral commitments and indeed his criticism can appear ad hoc and contingently motivated. Although Diderot often invokes the idea of an authorizing public on whose name he undertakes his critical work, the public is also the target of his criticism. The strain of this relation is at the heart of his growing sense of philosophical isolation that is in evidence especially in late pieces such as *Essay on the Reigns of Claudius and Nero*, where Diderot argues that those who choose the philosophical life remain essentially at odds with the world they inhabit.[9]

The theme of intellectual solitude is yet more prominent in Rousseau’s thought. This is captured in the line from Ovid’s *Tristia*, which he chooses as the epigraph of the *First Discourse*: “Here I am the barbarian, because no one understands me.” That both Diderot and Rousseau fashion their philosophical identities on classical models is a sign of the intellectual distance they seek from their age, a distance that they consider necessary in order adequately to perform their tasks as critics. For both, the philosopher is a Socratic gadfly who goads the city to wakefulness, identifying “wrong habits,” or shattering complacent assumptions of progress and civilization. For Rousseau in particular there is an important methodological dimension to intellectual solitude as a necessary correlate of criticism. He makes this clear in the *First Discourse*, when he anticipates the unpopularity of his thesis that “our souls have been corrupted in proportion to the advancement of our sciences and arts towards perfection” (III:9–10, *Discourse I* 39–40).[10] Although he prefaces these remarks with a direct appeal to the academy—“I defend virtue in front of virtuous men . . . what do I have to fear?” (III:5, *Discourse I* 34)—he recognizes that his consignment to intellectual solitude is inevitable given that the views he propounds are intended to provoke the complacent assumptions of received opinion. Seen in this light, Rousseau’s refusal to collect the prize he won for the

essay can be interpreted as an emphatic reassertion of the inevitability of this fate: his criticism of "our enlightened age" (III:9, *Discourse I* 38) simply *must* be incompatible with the approval of one of its most prominent institutions—the academy.

In trying to get a clearer idea about how each author conceives of his philosophical tasks, it is worth pausing to ask whether the frequent invocation of criticism is anything more than mere intellectual posturing. Writing generally about the role of the *philosophes* within the French Enlightenment, Norman Hampson warns us to be cautious about claims to radicalism. He questions the effectiveness of the *philosophes* as political and social critics, on the grounds that they were politically and socially isolated. He points out that they mainly operated within the *salon*, which attracted members of the nobility and the clergy and from which the commercially active classes were firmly excluded. The *salon*, Hampson argues, replicated thus the "gulf" that separated polite society from commerce and also cultural and intellectual life from the practice of politics.[11] Because they were at a further remove from both politics and commerce, the *philosophes* "operated in a kind of void," which, instead of having a liberating effect, encouraged abstraction.[12] Hemmed in by the *salon* conventions, which placed on them demands for wit and originality, rather than depth and systematicity, Hampson concludes, the *philosophes* pursued intellectual curiosity as an end in itself, neglecting practical issues; they saw themselves as "a kind of perpetual opposition, with a tendency towards generalised and abstract criticism."[13]

The picture Hampson presents gives us a very partial view of the social position and intellectual reach of the *philosophes*. The claim that the *philosophes* operated in a kind of void can only be seen as an exaggeration. We should distinguish between intellectual solitude as a methodological and critical device, and isolation as a social predicament. By the middle of the eighteenth century the *philosophes* had achieved both recognition and a degree of representation in and influence on the Académie française. Moreover, they were not sheltered from the world of commerce; publishing was, then as now, also a commercial enterprise. A good example here is the most ambitious publishing project of the French Enlightenment, the *Encyclopédie*. This financially as well as intellectually risky project was initiated by a publisher-bookseller, André-François Le Breton, who, seeking to emulate the commercial success of Ephraïm Chambers' *Cyclopaedia*, undertook to translate the work into French. In the event, however, under the joint editorship of Diderot and D'Alembert, the *Encyclopédie* developed into an entirely new project, running into several volumes, includ-

ing twelve volumes of illustrations alone.[14] The question of political participation is also less clear-cut than Hampson suggests. The wave of Anglophilia that swept the *salons* during this time, taking the form of often uncritical admiration for the English political institutions, can certainly be seen as an expression of frustration with the narrow political confines suffered at home. However, exclusion from formal politics did not stop the *philosophes* from having a political role or from concerning themselves with practical matters (the most famous case is perhaps Voltaire's involvement in the "affaire Calas").[15] As for the *salons*, the question of their composition becomes more complex once we look at it from the perspective of gender. The *salons* were unique among Enlightenment institutions—including German societies and English clubs—in being open to men and women alike, and indeed in being mainly run by women. Nor were the activities of the *philosophes* limited to the *salon*. Alternative, informal settings for discussion and debate were provided by the coffeehouse, the theater, and the exhibitions of art held annually or biennially at the Louvre, the Salons, which were open to the public, attracting vast numbers of visitors from most diverse social backgrounds.[16] The patterns of belonging and exclusion, engagement and detachment that form the social context in which Diderot and Rousseau pursue their critical projects are more complex than Hampson admits. The charge of abstraction, however, touches on the important question of the *philosophical* resources they bring to these tasks.

Rousseau and Diderot probe into the ambiguities and contradictions that lay beneath a supposedly enlightened society, showing the coarseness, shallowness, and servility they found coexisting alongside intellectual and aesthetic refinement. From within the thematic variety of their social criticism a distinctive philosophical project takes shape whose overarching aim is to identify and vindicate the elusive *volonté générale*. For both authors the problematic of the general will is intimately connected to the way in which each conceives of his authorial role and the constituency he addresses. Historically, the growing importance of these issues can be related, as Keith Michael Baker observes, to the emergence of the rhetoric of public spirit, public good, and public opinion, which designated a "new source of authority, the supreme tribunal to which the absolute monarchy no less than its critics was compelled to appeal."[17] What I want to examine here is the different ways in which Diderot and Rousseau grapple with the problem of *justifying* the normative force of this newly invoked source of authority. As we shall see, characteristic of Diderot's approach is doubt about the very possibility of providing such a justification. Corresponding to his diagnosis of

a society that is profoundly divided and thus cannot sustain a genuinely common conception of the good is a diagnosis of a philosophical reason that lacks the requisite authority to guarantee the workings of the "supreme tribunal" of the public. Rousseau shares both Diderot's diagnosis and his skepticism about rationalist and naturalist accounts of the good. This leads him to argue that a sustainable conception of the common good is only possible within a radically reformed and strongly interventionist society. Only in this context can the appeal to that which is shared, common, and general confer authority and legitimacy to individual choices. The different paths that they take on this issue reflect an inherent ambiguity in the use of the term "public." As Mona Ozouf points out, "public" has a "rather hazy" association with notions of public good and public interest, which give it a particular emotional charge and yet, at the same time, in order "to believe in the goodness and rationality of the 'public voice,' one first had to define it in a negative way as the opposite of common opinion."[18] As we shall see, it is Diderot's recognition of the heterogeneity of public voice and the plural and individualized conceptions of the good that ultimately blocks his attempts to formulate a convincing conception of this alternative source of authority and thus to authorize his critical choices. Eschewing the public—quite literally in the case of *Rameau's Nephew*, which only found a public posthumously—he stakes his claim as a citizen in the Republic of Letters by appealing to the distant past or to a wiser posterity. Rousseau, by contrast, persists on the task of addressing the "common opinion" with the aim of showing how it can be reformed, unified, and, as a result, made truly public.

3. Diderot's Normative Impasse

Diderot's lack of systematicity—what Lester Crocker termed the "chaotic order"[19] of his thought—together with his broad range of interests and sheer versatility complicate the task of forming a unified and cohesive view of his philosophical position. The reader is confronted with the task of fitting together strands of his thinking that seem to pull to different directions. In the *Encyclopédie* "Prospectus," written in 1750, Diderot includes among the aims of the forthcoming publication the provision of a comprehensive survey of the "latest advances" in all branches of human knowledge, the dissemination of the "principles of clear thinking," and, generally, "the progress of human knowledge" (*Enc* V:104). By contrast, *Rameau's Nephew* con-

tains a paradigmatic portrayal of the vanity of these aspirations.[20] The time lapsed between the composition of the two works does not fully account for the marked difference of perspective. Although Diderot came to view the *Encyclopédie* as a great "burden" (XIV:26, *Salon I* 6), he never considered the project as misguided or ill-conceived. I believe that we can form a more coherent view of Diderot's work if we view it from the perspective opened to us by the related problems of criticism and philosophical authority. What motivates both the educative zeal of the "Prospectus" and the self-mocking irony of *Rameau's Nephew* is Diderot's profound sense of the precariousness of human achievement. The philosophical correlate of this conviction is the thesis that all attempts at reflective justification of our normative commitments ultimately fail. To appreciate the nature and the force of Diderot's doubts, we need to retrace the paths that lead him to this essentially skeptical conclusion.

Diderot's diagnosis of philosophical impotence bears a complex relation to his materialist and determinist metaphysics. One way of looking at this relation is in terms of a conflict between his metaphysical commitments and the moral and aesthetic values he seeks to defend. Speaking of Diderot's "metaphysical commitments" stands in need of explanation, given his well-advertised opposition to metaphysics, which he describes as an essentially pointless pursuit burdened with the "arid subtleties" of ontology.[21] The contrast here, however, is between metaphysics as a body of a priori knowledge, which Diderot rejects, and the natural sciences, which provide us with "facts" and knowledge based on "experiences" (*Enc* V:97). Underpinning the epistemic claim that only experiences provide reliable knowledge, however, is a materialist ontology, which admits of no purely normative facts that can be used to justify particular moral judgments. It is adherence to this position that sums up Diderot's own metaphysics. Conflict arises because Diderot does not want to reduce norms and values to facts about human behavior or psychology because he considers such "facts" to be intractable and not reliably distinguishable from the values we attach to them. Evidence of this tension can be found in Diderot's criticisms of Helvetius's *De l'Homme*. While remaining sympathetic to the materialist principles on which Helvetius bases his analysis, Diderot expresses profound reservations at his portrayal of humanity. "It may well be true," he argues, "that physical pain and pleasure are the only principles of animal behavior (*les actions de l'animal*), but are they also the only principles of human action?" (*Réfutation*,

566).[22] Diderot returns to this question on several occasions, seeking a definition of the human being such that would allow the dimension of values to be taken into account:

> What is a man? . . . An animal? . . . Without doubt. Yet a dog is an animal too. And so is the wolf. A man, however, is neither wolf nor dog. . . . How can we have a notion of good and evil, beauty and ugliness, kindness and wickedness without having a preliminary notion of man? (XVI:205–6, Salon II 107)

The philosophical interrogation of what it is to be a human being and to hold certain values, which leads Diderot to dismiss both nature and reason as providing plausible answers to these questions, is framed by a diagnosis of pervasive value-skepticism, which renders equally unconvincing the appeal to communal or shared values.[23]

These issues are most forcefully raised in work Diderot produced after his involvement with the *Encyclopédie* had come to an end, and it is to this work I now turn.[24] In particular, I will be focusing on his reviews of the Salons exhibitions at the Louvre, and his philosophical dialogues, or "fictions" as they are often called,[25] where he reveals himself as an exploratory and self-questioning thinker, who is most at home in the dialogical rather than the declamatory mode. He uses the flexibility of the dialogical form to examine different social perspectives and philosophical ideas and to make vivid their limitations. Sometimes he adopts an intimate, almost confessional, tone, and sometimes, as in the polemic he inserts in the *Salon of 1767* entitled "Satire against Luxury in the Mode of Persius," a more theatrical idiom. Because of its bold, almost brutal, style, the "Satire" is a good place to start our investigation of the relation between Diderot's social and philosophical criticism. The polemic is in the form of a dialogue between two differently minded observers, one of whom represents a critical viewpoint and the other a complacent one:

> My friend, let us love our country; let us love our contemporaries; let us submit ourselves to an order of things that, by chance, could have turned out better or worse; let us enjoy the privileges of our position. If we see faults, which doubtlessly exist, let us wait for our masters, in their experience and wisdom, to remedy them, and let us stay here. (XVI:552, Salon II 79)

Alongside this conciliatory voice, which preaches prudence and quiet acceptance of the deliverances of "chance" (*hazard*), Diderot places an opposing view of someone who responds with pained anger to the spectacle of contemporary French society: "Stay here! Me! Me! Let him stay who can watch patiently a people who pretends to be civilized, the

most civilized on earth, auction civil posts to the highest bidder" (XVI:552). Money is the source of corruption: "cursed be he who made gold the idol of the nation . . . he who planted the seeds of this insolent ostentation of wealth" (XVI:553, *Salon II* 80). This heartfelt protest against venality becomes part of a more sophisticated view of social ills, which Diderot presents in fragmentary form throughout the *Salon of 1767*. Interspersing art criticism and social criticism, Diderot uses a topical debate on the effects of luxury on society to argue that economic servitude is as insidious as political servitude. He coins the term "tyranny of luxury" to draw a parallel between the effects of the tyrannical power of money and those of political tyranny, arguing that both systems are socially divisive and, ultimately, destabilizing. He argues that political tyranny brings about the dissolution of social bonds, often as a result of a deliberate policy of the despots, who adopt as their maxim the motto "divide and rule" in order to create a society of "solitary," "isolated, and hence more vulnerable," individuals (*Oeuvres Politiques*, 305). Because they offer no sustainable conception of the common good and erode social cohesion, tyrannical regimes contrive to bringing people back to their original "state of savagery" (*Oeuvres Politiques*, 306).[26] Diderot's aim is to show that economic tyranny has similarly catastrophic consequences: gross inequalities in wealth endanger social cohesion and the common good and create a "tyranny of luxury."

The main argument, presented as a dialogue between Diderot and Grimm, the editor of the *Correspondance littéraire*, in which Diderot's reviews appeared, concerns the difference between wealth, or *le bon luxe*, and its nefarious manifestation in the tyranny of luxury. Diderot accepts that wealth promotes the general good, by creating the conditions for the material well-being of the people and for the flourishing of the arts. The tyranny of luxury, by contrast, is divisive because it is based on blatant economic inequality: "a small portion of the nation gluts itself with wealth, while the greatest number languishes in indigence" (XVI:167, *Salon II* 80). This general indictment aside, however, he offers no argument about the causes for the creation of the economic oligarchies he despises. Thus the transition from the idyllic condition of *le bon luxe*, which is associated here with a vaguely distant agricultural existence, to the tyranny of luxury remains mysterious. Diderot returns to this issue in a subsequent work, the *Apologia for Galiani*, which contains one of his most detailed discussions of economic policy. Here he argues that agricultural income is devalued by the application of laissez-faire economic theories propounded by the physiocrats and aimed to inhibit the formation of monopolistic forces in the economy.

Diderot contends that policies inspired by such theories tend to produce the opposite effect because they encourage the creation of an "artificial agricultural surplus, which benefits the owners of large estates," while the majority of the small farmers and the "*petit peuple*" are left in a state of "continuing misery and hardship" (*Oeuvres Politiques*, 101). Against the physiocrats' appeal to what they claimed to be objectively valid natural laws, Diderot adopts an emphatically personal stance, writing as a witness of the effects of rural poverty. He describes how farmers remained indebted to landowners right to the end of their lives: "Dead or alive, [the farmer] remains indigent. . . . To hell with your generalities!" (*Oeuvres Politiques*, 95). The outrage and sense of urgency of these remarks is fueled not only by Diderot's sympathy with the predicament of the poor, but also the fear that the exacerbation of existing inequalities brought about by such economic policies would deepen the desperation of the dispossessed leading to insurrection and, finally, to anarchy.

Though Diderot saw rightly that political and social order would continue to be threatened by grain shortages,[27] the most compelling aspect of his analysis of the tyranny of luxury is his description of the *gradually* destabilizing effects of inequality. In the *Salon of 1767*, he uses his criticism of the self-indulgent and venal behavior, and the sheer bad taste, of those who can afford displays of opulence, to show how the power of money is neither impersonal nor occult but wielded by those who possess it. He argues that private choices do not remain private but have broader repercussions by showing how wealthy patrons of the arts who possess poor taste are nonetheless able to influence artistic production through commissioning works of art. The upshot, for Diderot, is that art becomes subordinated to the "whim and caprice of a handful of rich, bored, fastidious men whose taste is as corrupt as their morality" (XVI:168, *Salon II* 77). The artist who succeeds is the one who caters to this fashionable taste and is able to render the figures of truth, virtue, and justice "suitable for a financier's bedroom" (XVI:62, *Salon II* 9). Diderot maintains that these aesthetic choices reveal a deeper incapacity to embrace ideas of aesthetic, moral, or civic excellence. The concentration of economic and social power in the hands of a few individuals creates a ruling elite devoid of civic, moral, and aesthetic sensibilities, and generally unable or unwilling to recognize any values or to value any talents unconnected to economic success. He suggests that these failings do not only reflect a broader social trend, but also contribute to it: "From the moment that anything can be had with gold, gold is what is wanted; and merit that leads to nothing, becomes nothing" (XVI:553, *Salon II* 79). The great danger, as

Diderot sees it, is that once money becomes established as the "measure of all things," all pursuits other than those dedicated to its acquisition are devalued and considered worthless. As a result, economic considerations do not simply displace moral ones, they replace them: "There is but one vice and that is poverty. There is but one virtue and that is wealth. One is either rich or contemptible" (*Oeuvres Politiques*, 285). The moralization of economic categories is perhaps the most insidious effect of the tyranny of luxury, for it allows a recognizable value system to survive that is devoid of any moral commitments. In their stead emerge relations of abuse and parasitism:

> The bad poets, bad painters, bad sculptors, antique dealers, jewellers and prostitutes . . . avenge us. They are the vermin that gnaw our vampires and destroy them, pouring back, drop by drop, the blood that they drained from us. (XVI:168, *Salon II* 77)

This revenge of the weak, Diderot implies, does not compensate for their loss of dignity, the fact they have secured their economic survival through "grovelling, self-degradation and prostitution" (XVI:553, *Salon II* 80).

Diderot's social diagnosis, his analysis of how good and bad came to mean rich and poor, motivates his engagement with the philosophical question of whether there can be an objective "measure," or "rule" for our evaluative judgments.[28] It is in this context that he introduces the idea of the general will (*volonté générale*). The immediate occasion for reflecting on the general will is provided by his discussion on natural right in the *Encyclopédie*. Diderot endorses the idea of natural rights but argues that what is to *count* as a natural right cannot be left to the individual to decide, setting himself up "as both judge and advocate" (*Enc* VII:27). "But," Diderot continues, "if we deny the individual the right to determine the nature of justice and injustice, before which tribunal shall we plead this important question? Where? Before humanity. Humanity must adjudge the matter because it desires solely the common good" (27). Here then we have an attempt to fill in the normative void left by the hollowing out of notions of good and bad with a notion of the common good, as this is upheld by the tribunal of humanity. This in turn ushers the concept of the general will: "private wills," Diderot argues, "are suspect; they may be either good or bad, but the general will is always good" (*Enc* VII:27). The idea of a general will, however, remains vague. It appears to be no more than a placeholder for Diderot's universalist intentions with respect to the tribunal of humanity. To the question, where can I consult this will? he replies by citing both convention—that is "the principles of prescribed law of

all civilized nations"—and nature, which manifests itself through the "emotions of indignation and resentment" (*Enc* VII:28).[29] Cultural diversity and the unreliability of natural feeling, however, represent serious problems to this account. That he is tempted to look for the general will in both convention and nature is surprising, given Diderot's views on the weakness of such arguments. His frequently repeated observation that good, beautiful, and just are differently interpreted in different societies renders his optimistic appeal to the social constant of "civilized nations" unconvincing. Equally unconvincing is his appeal to feeling as a putative natural constant that provides the basis of the general will. Diderot himself argues so when discussing the views of the Scottish sentimentalists in the *Salon of 1767*. The basic argument is that natural feeling cannot be a reliable guide to the general will because it is ultimately the result of unfathomable natural forces that act without regard for ideas of justice or morality: human beings inhabit, and are part of, a dynamic natural universe that is in a state of "permanent flux" and from which "order" (*organization*) emerges out of the fortuitous and spontaneous interaction of natural "particles" (*molecules*) thrown together by chance, like "dice" (XVI:179, *Salon II* 90). Diderot's substitution of the principle of sufficient reason with chance leaves little scope for the desired harmonization of natural feeling and the good. Indeed, the fatal blow to the universalist conception of the "tribunal of humanity" is struck by Diderot's own claim that "everything in us is empirical" (XVI:87-8, *Salon II* 23–24). Who we *are*, as well as our moral and aesthetic sensibilities, is a function of diverse environmental influences; "humanity" cannot therefore be used criterially, as what Diderot calls a "measure," because it is not in itself a unified and stable concept.[30]

The significance of Diderot's reflections on value does not rest with his positive claims, which are meagre and ill-supported, but with his criticism, which is, by contrast, powerful, meticulous, and lucid. Important in this respect are the two fictional works, *Supplement to Bougainville's Voyage* and *Rameau's Nephew*.[31] The *Supplement to Bougainville's Voyage*, written in response to Louis-Antoine de Bougainville's account of his travels to Tahiti, has often been seen as making use of the Rousseauean trope of setting wholesome nature against culture and thus as offering a qualified defense of a natural utopia.[32] This is precisely, however, the kind of contrast Diderot sets out to undermine in this work, which is best seen as a critical exploration of the limitations of the use of nature normatively either by appeals to nature's command or by the reduction of normative to natural facts. Diderot uses the theme of cultural diversity, which was a

common *topos* for his contemporaries, to explore the question of how cross-cultural evaluative judgments are possible. The dialogue is inconclusive on this broader question. By the end, however, it becomes fairly clear that one tempting option, namely invoking nature in support of cross-cultural evaluative judgments, is both misguided and fruitless. Indeed the subtitle hints as much: "On the inappropriateness of attaching moral ideas onto certain physical acts that do not admit of them" (*Bougainville*, XII:577). In his earlier work, *On the Interpretation of Nature*, Diderot had already argued that we should not mistake "nature with God" (*Interpretation*, IX:26), meaning both that nature should not be seen as the product of a divine power, and that it should not be used, instead of God, as a guarantor or foundation for a system of values. In the *Supplement*, he shows how easy it is to mistake for natural what is, in fact, the product of a complex social organization and thus how treacherous it is to seek to use nature evaluatively. The work is in the form of a dialogue between two unidentified interlocutors, designated merely as A and B, who discuss the relative merits of European Christian morality and the "natural" morality of the "uncivilized" Tahitians by relating the experiences of a chaplain in Tahiti. A and B start from a perspective of doubt about European superiority: "A: I thought the European powers sent only honest souls to command their overseas possessions, charitable men, full of humanity and capable of compassion.... B: Right! That is precisely what concerns them!" (*Bougainville*, XII:583). Equally, however, troubled by accounts of female infibulation and other "customs of unusual and necessary cruelty," A and B have difficulty assenting to the view of the "savage" as "innocent and gentle" (*Bougainville*, XII:585). It is in this context that we are given the account of the encounter between the chaplain and his host, Orou. Orou disputes the chaplain's Christian morality, claiming that in order to find out what is good "at all times and in all places" one must follow nature: "its eternal will is that good be preferred to evil and the general good to the particular goods" (*Bougainville*, XII:643). However, it transpires that this natural Tahitian morality that prescribes what, from a European perspective, looks like an extreme form of sexual freedom is, in fact, part of a culture which, in its own way, is shown to be as sophisticated, artificial, and restrictive as that of the civilized Europeans. The Tahitian freedom of sexual relations is shown to be regulated by a strict social code based on eugenic and economic considerations: because children are viewed as a source of wealth, the aim is to maximize opportunities for childbearing. Therefore the Tahitians, just like the Europeans with their notions of shame and guilt, attach values to the natural facts of sex and procreation. The encounter between

Tahitians and Europeans is thus not one between nature and culture, but rather between two different cultures. The question it raises and leaves unresolved is which are the *right* values. This question is left unresolved because, Diderot suggests, it simply cannot be decided by reference to those "natural facts," which, after all, Tahitians and Europeans have in common.

If we approach now *Rameau's Nephew* from the perspectives opened by the *Salon of 1767* and the *Supplement*, we can see it as playing a vital role in Diderot's normative reflections. The work, presented as a dialogue between a philosopher, who is referred to in the first person as "I," and a character based on the nephew of the famous composer, Jean-Philippe Rameau, designated simply as "He," deals with a wide range of issues, including individuality, genius, and character. What has attracted, however, many interpreters is the way in which the candid confessions of the character of the nephew seem to upset the worldview of the philosopher. Foucault interprets this as the reassertion of the repressed voice of madness, arguing that it shows the "necessary instability . . . of all judgement in which unreason is denounced as something external and inessential."[33] Others describe the work as a study in the search for authenticity.[34] Here, I take neither approach. Foucault's identification of the voice of the nephew with the voice of madness is unconvincing because the nephew is able to produce perfectly rational arguments for his behavior. Furthermore, the nephew's morality, which consists chiefly in following the bidding of his stomach, is shown to be fully congruous with Diderot's materialism. As we shall see, instability is not an outcome, following from the effort to suppress unreason, but rather the *premise* of the dialogue. This is also the reason for rejecting the second interpretation. The different layers of physical, social, and moral instability exposed in this dialogue render problematic the very ideal of authenticity. The nephew's seemingly authentic behavior, his undisguised concern with the satisfaction of his natural desires, is an authentic product of a corrupt society, rather than of untrammelled nature; his voice is shown to be as authentic as is the culture of the Tahitians natural.

The key theme of the dialogue is change. This is announced already in the epigraph "born under the malign influence of every single Vertumnus" (XII:69, *RN* 33).[35] This line, which in its original context in Horace is used to introduce a fickle character, here introduces Rameau's nephew, suggesting that he too was "born under the malign influence" of the god. While the philosopher is portrayed as a creature of habit—"Come rain or shine, my custom is to go for a stroll in the Palais-Royal every afternoon at about five" (XII:69, *RN* 33)—

the nephew is introduced with the paradoxical claim "Nothing is less like him than himself" (XII:71, *RN* 34). Though the claim is amply justified by the subsequent description of the nephew's changing looks and mercurial character, it discloses the metaphysical pitch of the dialogue, the ceaseless flux, which manifests itself in the nephew's problematic self-identity, and which constitutes a direct challenge to the stable identity of "I." Over this theme of natural or fundamental fluidity, however, Diderot constructs a theme of social instability, represented by the nephew's lack of secure social position and regular income. His changing appearance reflects his changing fortunes and precarious position on the margins of polite society. He lives by his wits, flattering wealthy patrons and running their errands: "I am a person who isn't of any consequence. People do what they like with me, in my company, in front of me, without my standing on ceremony" (XII:68, *RN* 46). A further layer of instability is revealed when the nephew offers his frank and cynical opinions on morality, arguing that society, in which "all classes prey on each other" (XII:113, *RN* 63), is ruled by greed and that the moral code is no more than a "trade idiom," a "kind of credit system—no intrinsic value, but value conferred by public opinion" (XII:113, *RN* 62). Although we are warned that "the notions of good and evil must be strangely muddled in his head" (XII:70, *RN* 33), the nephew's moral disorder is seen as symptomatic of the disappearance of a shared conception of the good, which results from social alienation, or "estrangement" (XVI:555, *Salon II* 81); that is, the dissolution of affective and familial bonds, of the ties to one's country, friends, and fellow citizens that have traditionally sustained the idea of a common good. The nephew's teaching is that "in a matter as variable as behaviour there is no such thing as the absolutely, essentially, universally true or false, unless it is that one must be what self-interest dictates—good or bad, wise or foolish, serious or ridiculous, virtuous or vicious" (XII:139, *RN* 83). *Rameau's Nephew* serves thus to contextualize and also to sharpen Diderot's normative question, is a general notion of the good conceivable in a social context of competing individual wills pursuing particular interests?

This question too is left unanswered. The disappearance of a shared view of the good, Diderot suggests, has a counterpart in the selfish pursuit of pleasure. But here social and philosophical diagnosis meet: the pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain are the "principles" invoked in Helvetius's materialist explanation of human behavior, which, as we saw earlier, Diderot rejects. However, he lacks the philosophical resources to offer an alternative, nonreductive account of good and bad. When the philosopher in *Rameau's Nephew* is confronted

with the nephew's opportunistic and self-interested morality, he cannot say why the nephew *should* care for anything beyond the satisfaction of his immediate desires.[36] Similarly, when in the *Salon of 1767*, Diderot in propria persona criticizes the artist Jean-Jacques Bachelier for preferring money to honor, he admits defeat when confronted with Bachelier's defiant "I want to drink, sleep, have excellent wines, luxurious clothing, pretty women" (XVI:171, *Salon II* 84). Diderot's silence is essentially an acknowledgment of philosophical impotence that only the consoling thought of a benevolent "posterity" or of a noble but remote classical past assuages.[37] But there is more to this failure: Diderot's normative question becomes intractable because his search for an objectively valid content for "good" and "right" collides with his account of the subjective formation of our ideas of good and right, which stresses variety and mutability. That different people find different things good or right is as good a clue as any that everything is "empirical" in us, that we come to be who we are through a process of association of beliefs that is not obeying any predetermined path. This conviction is reinforced by Diderot's conception of nature itself as mutable and contingently organized. Yet despite his conviction that there is no stable natural substrate or ground, Diderot persists in framing his search for an objective "measure" precisely as a search after a fact or a hitherto undiscovered piece of knowledge. What motivates this search is the requirement that the "ought" be compatible with "facts as we know them," without it being historically or culturally determined. That this search leads to a dead end is clearly illustrated in the article "Cité," where Diderot seeks to distinguish between the historical origin of cities and what he terms their "philosophical" origin, that is, the origin of the city understood in the singular as a "public moral entity" (*Enc*, VI:461). While eloquently filling in the genealogical-historical account, he says nothing about the latter. The "philosophical" account remains an unredeemed promise and the "public moral entity" a cipher. Yet Diderot's impasse can also be viewed as offering the opportunity to strike out in a new direction. This is the direction taken by Rousseau. Rousseau's basic insight is that the authority Diderot is searching for cannot be found because the public moral entity is an essentially *artificial* entity, the modeling and preservation of which are the essential tasks of the *polis*.

4. Rousseau's Conception of Freedom and Its Problems

Diderot's violent social criticism and his skeptical philosophical conclusions form the context and the starting point for Rousseau's own inves-

tigation of normativity. Diderot's influence is most visible in the *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences* and the *Discourse on Inequality*, both of which bear the traces of a fruitful engagement with Diderot's thought.[38] Although Diderot shared many of the ideas expressed in these works, however, he remained in disagreement with what he took to be Rousseau's central thesis: that we must abandon society and return to nature. For Diderot, this represented a form of capitulation to the corrosive and divisive forces at work in modern society, which he saw as already conspiring to return us to our natural state. Though he did not share Hobbes's apocalyptic vision of the state of nature, he thought that Hobbes was right in identifying the potential for disruption and violence in unsocialized nature and conceived of human society as a constant struggle to establish order and continuity over a fundamentally unstable natural basis.[39] Although, as I will show, this criticism was based on a misunderstanding of Rousseau's argument, it caused a rift that precipitated Rousseau's disaffection with the philosophical milieu, which Rousseau described as a "break with philosophy" itself.[40] Many commentators concur, seeking to emphasize the visionary, antiphilosophical character of his work.[41] I think that such emphasis is misleading, cutting off Rousseau from the vein of philosophical skepticism that feeds even his public disavowal of philosophy. Simply summed up, the thought that spurs Rousseau on is that we cannot rely on reason alone either to determine the nature of the good or our status as moral agents. Indirect but powerful evidence of this can be found in his epistolary novel *Julie or the New Héloise*, where Rousseau has one of the main characters, St. Preux, expressing his impatience with fashionable materialist refutations of human freedom:

> I hear many arguments against human freedom; but I despise all such sophistries because whilst they can prove to me with reasoned argument that I am not free, inner feeling, which is stronger than all arguments, shows to me that they are wrong. (*Julie* II:683)

Unlike his hero though, Rousseau is not a philosophical naïve who speaks from the heart. He offers instead a powerful and original vindication of human freedom within the social context. However, he fails to pursue the radical implications of his conception of freedom for political and social organization and presents instead an oppressive social and political model. The reason for this failure, I will be arguing, is a deep skepticism, which he inherits from Diderot, not only about the powers of human reason reliably to guide our choices, but also about human nature itself.

Rousseau's skepticism about human nature has often eluded his commentators. That man is naturally good is supposed to be the bedrock of Rousseau's moral philosophy. This conviction can be found already in Diderot's article "Hobbisme" in the *Encyclopédie*. Diderot sums up the differences between Rousseau and Hobbes arguing that "the one thinks man naturally good, and the other thinks him wicked" (*Enc* VII:146). This summary of Rousseau's argument, however, is misleading and perpetuates a misunderstanding of his assumptions regarding human nature. When we read claims such as the famous opening lines in *Émile* that "everything is good as fashioned by the author of things" (IV:245, *Émile*), we need to distinguish two senses of "good." One is good as a positive force, that is, as a natural propensity for goodness, and the other is the absence of badness, which enables one to respond to a moral education and to *become* good. It is the latter that interests Rousseau here. As we shall see, his key premise is not that human beings are naturally good, but rather that human nature is malleable. Though he shares this view with Diderot, he puts it to a different use, for his main concern is to show that human beings are neither marred by destructive selfishness nor born carrying the burden of the original sin. The force of his critical argument lies in the contrast he draws between an "original state" that obtains prior to exposure to social forces of corruption and one that obtains after such exposure. This contrast forms the first step in an argument by which Rousseau seeks to establish that the moral and social problems he identifies are of human, rather than natural or divine, origin, and that they are therefore remediable. The failure to display moral and civic excellence is thus a *historical* failure, which can be corrected if adequate measures are taken to resist corrupting influences. To substantiate this thesis, Rousseau embarks on an ambitious diagnostic project in which the task of criticism of social ills becomes inextricably linked with the task of self-knowledge.

The *First Discourse*, which can be seen as the prelude to Rousseau's diagnostic project, draws on a long philosophical tradition, which ultimately issues from Plato, in which the arts are viewed with suspicion on account of their supposedly corrupting influence on morals. In the eighteenth century, this view was more closely associated with the writings of the Abbé Saint-Pierre, who wrote that the arts "demonstrate the existing riches of a nation" but do not show that the nation's happiness "will increase and prove lasting."[42] Rousseau, however, builds this familiar theme into a broader thesis, which extends beyond the narrow domain of the arts to include the natural sciences, philosophy, and even good manners. He argues that these accomplish-

ments and refinements stand in the way of the pursuit of virtue, and further, that they are complicit with despotism, distracting the "happy slaves" from gaining awareness of their true condition which is one of servitude (III:7, *Discourse I* 36). Though he presents this as an argument that reveals something about the very nature of these pursuits, by denying any moral significance to the much vaunted "restoration" of the arts and sciences, he is able to make also a historically specific thesis and to target the moral losses suffered by *his* age and society.

Rousseau's arguments proved highly controversial, eliciting widespread criticism from a series of correspondents. In replying to these criticisms, Rousseau attributes his opponents' resistance to a basic misunderstanding: "They always speak to me about greatness and splendour. I was speaking of morality and virtue."[43] On his view, this misunderstanding reveals a deeper problem. For if his critics claim both to be "full of admiration for our present morals"[44] and to love virtue, then they must have failed to see what it was that he actually saw and wrote about in his *Discourse*, namely, that contemporary society, though ostensibly enlightened and civilized, is, in fact, profoundly corrupt. According to Rousseau, this is indicative not merely of a lack of correspondence between his views and those of his audience, but of a profound incongruity between the image his audience has of itself and its true condition. There is an important connection between what he sees as modern society's misrecognition of itself and the modern loss of freedom. His own writings are intended to contribute at once to society's self-knowledge and to its emancipation. It is just this connection which becomes the primary subject of his *Second Discourse*, which opens, fittingly, with an invocation of the Delphic injunction "know thyself" (III:83, *Discourse II* 91).

The basic premise of the *Second Discourse* is that genuine self-knowledge is difficult to attain because humanity itself has become deformed. Rousseau aims to retrace the historical process of this deformation and to reconstruct the genesis of those relations of social, economic, and political dependence, which have led to this condition. His account of the injustices of social and economic inequality is in many respects similar to Diderot's and is based on a shared conviction that inequality is not a mere natural fact, but rather the result of a social system which permits "a handful of men [to be] glutted with superfluities while the starving multitude lacks necessities" (III:194, *Discourse II* 181). However, because he embarks on the more ambitious diagnostic project of self-knowledge, he is able to probe deeper than Diderot does, seeking to discover the origins of this "strange and fatal" system (*Narcissus* II:969). A key element in his account is the

claim that not only social and economic inequality, but the very effort to conceal it behind an appearance of "civilization" are *systematic* features of social organization. If, however, inequality and deception are indeed systematic, then their origins must be sought at the very bases of organized society. Hence, Rousseau sets out to reconstruct the emergence of the various ties that bind people together and determine their relations to each other. He maintains that at a crucial point in human development natural inequalities are transformed into social and economic ones so that, gradually, the terms "strong and weak" come to signify "rich and poor" (III:179, *Discourse II* 162). These relations precede formal political arrangements, but crucially they also determine them. Following other contemporary political theorists, he uses the model of a social contract between individuals to explain how people enter into the kind of binding formal arrangements characteristic of organized societies. What distinguishes Rousseau's account, however, is that he uses the concept of the social contract diagnostically: he argues that the inequalities of contemporary society are founded on a bad contract, that is, one in which already established relations of inequality are sealed in law. Modern society's misrecognition of itself is thus explained by the fact that the contract on which it is based is rooted in deception: the poor were cheated into believing that the interests of all the participants would be equally protected; whereas, in fact, this original social contract "gave new fetters to the poor and new forces to the rich" (III:178, *Discourse II* 160).

What has caused a great deal of misunderstanding, both by his contemporaries and by subsequent interpreters, is Rousseau's use of the opposition between "natural" and "civilized" man in the preceding account. Besides Diderot, Voltaire also thought that the *Second Discourse* offered a defense of primitivism and jokingly congratulated Rousseau for arousing in us the desire to "walk on all fours."[45] This interpretation, however, is based on a misconception of the function of the idea of a natural man. Natural man is portrayed as the original inhabitant of a "state of nature," that is, of a state entirely free of the ties and relations characteristic of social life in general. Natural man thus forms the perfect foil for civilized man, who, by contrast, is defined by his membership in an iniquitous and corrupt society. Whereas the former is strong and self-sufficient, the latter is weak and enervated; he constantly craves recognition and "knows how to live only in the opinion of others" (III:193, *Discourse II* 179). This contrast, however, serves to emphasize the pitiful condition of civilized man, not to present natural man as an ideal to which we should aspire, for *ex hypothesis* the latter is outside society and thus cannot form the

basis for recommendations about how our social condition might improve. For this, a comparison is needed with an alternative social form of life. Rousseau's invocation of the original inhabitants of a state of nature forms part of his attempt to address the critical task of self-knowledge. Man's presocial existence provides a vantage point from which Rousseau can question ideas traditionally used to justify a coercive political order, such as the supposed natural propensity of human beings for wickedness and their fundamental ungovernability. By stripping away all those elements of human character that can be attributed to what he calls the various "accidents" of human culture, the practices and institutions that emerge and become established at specific junctures of human history, he seeks to show that human beings are not fundamentally evil (III:162, *Discourse II* 140). This assertion serves as no more than an auspicious starting point that permits us to hope that an alternative social order based on freedom and equality is possible for human beings. Interpreted in this way, the argument of the *Second Discourse* should not be seen as projecting a longing gaze back toward some primitive past, but rather as paving the way forward for the political proposals articulated in the *Social Contract*.[46]

In the positive argument of the *Social Contract*, nature plays only a minimal role. Rousseau states emphatically that the constitution of the state is not the work of nature but "the work of art" (III:424, *SC* 73). He uses the idea of natural freedom primarily in the context of a negative argument, which aims to show that relations of political authority are based on human conventions and thus cannot be decided by reference to nature.[47] The problem then is to determine the right conventions, that is, to determine which conventions best establish the human entitlement to freedom in a social context.[48] Rousseau is the first modern political thinker explicitly to articulate a genuinely social conception of freedom; that is, a kind of freedom which cannot be conceived as existing outside political society and is, in effect, radically discontinuous with natural freedom. Whereas natural freedom exclusively concerns individual choices regarding one's own well-being and self-preservation, social or "civil" or "conventional" (III:360, *SC* 12) freedom has an inescapably collective aspect: it concerns choices that affect the entire society.

Although it is common to view Rousseau's notion of social freedom through a Kantian lens, stressing the aspect of self-legislation,[49] this can be misleading. Rousseau begins with the concept of "self-mastery," of obeying one's own will, of being one's own *master* (III:424, *SC* 73). This concept contains the idea of independent deliberation and of the independent execution of one's own plans. The question then is

how this idea can be transposed in the social context. What provides the formal link between natural and social freedom is the relation to self outlined in the concept of self-mastery; the self in the social context, however, is a radically altered one. Social freedom has precisely a civic dimension, which Rousseau seeks to capture by introducing the new element of obligation, the idea that the citizen is bound to the social body by obligatory undertakings. In this way, he fills in so to speak the missing account of the "philosophical origin" of the "moral entity" of the city, which Diderot failed to provide. A city is a moral entity because, Rousseau argues, the citizen incurs an obligation "to a whole of which [he] forms a part" (III:363, *SC* 14). Therefore, although the citizen still obeys his own will, what counts as "own" is not the individual but the corporate entity to which he is beholden. It is in this context that the term "self-legislation" is introduced: it is an expression of the citizens' "moral freedom" (III:365, *SC* 16). Moral freedom thus means that each citizen has legislative rights. In effect, what Rousseau presents here is the opposite of the "bad" contract, described in the *Second Discourse*. This contract is good because, apart from doing away with property, it preserves the equality and freedom of all by way of the contractants' mutual recognition of each other's legislative rights.

While Rousseau takes us a step further than Diderot in seeking to explain not only the sources of the de facto authority of social norms but also the sources of their legitimacy through the idea of obligation, he undermines his account by the way in which he seeks further to bind the exercise of such legitimate authority to a notion of the common good. The mutual recognition of the legislative rights of the citizens established through the social contract has an important corollary in the collective assumption of the duty to exercise these rights to legislate for the common good. This represents an advance over Diderot's conception of the general will, insofar as the general will is now defined as that which wills the "common good" (III:371, *SC* 20). The citizen thus still "obeys himself alone" (III:360, *SC* 12) but only because his willing as citizen has a social, "general," dimension. The problem emerges once Rousseau seeks to define this common good substantively, by linking it with antecedently established communal interests. As we shall see, consulting the general will becomes equivalent with adopting, as one's own, the view of the common good that is endorsed by one's particular community. To ensure the indivisibility of sovereignty, Rousseau turns thus social cohesion into a constituent feature of political freedom, stipulating the formation of a strong collective identity among the citizens. In other words, "mine" is only the starting point of a formative process that

leads to "ours." In this way, however, the difference between individual and collective, which is essential if we are to hold onto the idea that the citizen "obeys himself," and the difference between a "general" and a "communal" will, which is necessary for the moral authority that the idea of a general will must carry, become erased.[50]

Originally, Rousseau presents the idea of the common good as nothing more than an orienting device, what we might call a regulative idea, intended to enable citizens to abstract from their particular interests. The general will is that which "considers only the common interest" in contrast to the "will of all," which takes "private interest into account and is no more than the sum of particular wills: but take away from these same wills the pluses and minuses that cancel one another and the general will remains as the sum of the differences" (III:373, *SC* 23). Rousseau claims that this abstractive process, through which all considerations of personal or factional gain are eliminated, is sufficient for the determination of the common good. The common good is supposed to reveal itself individually to each citizen in the form of a clear and distinct political insight: "the common good is everywhere clearly apparent, and only good sense is needed to perceive it" (III:437, *SC* 85). Ideally, Rousseau adds, the first man to propose a law "merely says what all have already felt" (437). The polity, which he envisages here, is unperturbed by argument, or disagreement. If, however, the only mechanism by which the common good is determined is a process of abstraction from particular interests—that is, a merely negative process—then it is difficult to share his confidence about the emergence of consensus.[51] It is reasonable to allow that even if they are equally well intentioned and well informed, citizens may entertain different views about the common good. Rousseau justifies his expectation of coincidence of opinions by supplementing the initial procedural account with a substantive account of the common good. The citizens are not simply required to think correctly about the common good—that is, simply to abstract from personal interests—they are also expected to identify the *correct* common good. This latter is established by the particular historical community to which the citizens belong, taking into account what this community has come to recognize as its basic interests.

The requirement for social cohesion is particularly prominent in Rousseau's writings on the constitutions of Corsica and Poland.[52] Here, he recommends participation in communal festivals and celebrations in order to forge tight bonds among citizens and to strengthen their allegiance to their country (*patrie*). This essentially static political model, which assumes an unchanging common identity preserved in a shared

culture of rituals and festivals, is already delineated in the *Social Contract*. Seeking to avoid the possibility of any doubts arising about the nature of the common good, or about how best it might be pursued, Rousseau explicitly discourages political debate on the grounds that it produces dissent: "the nearer opinion approaches unanimity, the greater is the dominance of the general will. On the other hand, long debates, dissent and tumult proclaim the ascendancy of particular interests and the decline of the State" (III:439, *SC* 97). Further, he stresses the importance of strong national or regional identity for the successful practical application of the ideas presented in the *Social Contract*[53]—as he writes in *Émile*, "where there is no longer fatherland, there can no longer be citizens" (IV:249, *Émile* 40). Thus, not only do citizens have little opportunity to disagree about the good, but, since they belong to a culturally homogeneous state, they have little chance to form different ideas about it. Once the identification of citizen and patriot becomes complete, deliberation about the common good becomes perfunctory, and Rousseau's polity comes to resemble the claustrophobic community of the Wolmar estate described in *New Héloise*. The regime of benevolent despotism administered by the landowner, Wolmar, is centered purposefully and painstakingly around the idea of a "common good," which is used to inculcate a sense of collective identity and has as its purpose not the creation of free citizens but the creation of loyal, grateful, and happy servants.[54]

Even in *Émile*, where there is no community to speak of and where Rousseau offers his most positive view of individuality, a similar concern with agreement about the good is shown to be an essential feature of the determination of the good. Émile is educated to develop an independent mind and is actively encouraged to think his own thoughts. He does not belong to any community and is raised in relative isolation; he is Émile, not a citizen. Yet even here, the goodness of Émile's independence of mind is made conditional on his capacity to agree with his tutor about his education. In a revealing passage toward the end of the book, Émile, having spent two years roaming the "great states of Europe" and having seen "what is truly worthy of curiosity," is keen to conclude his travels. His educator then asks him what he makes of his observations:

> "What is the final result of your observations? What course have you chosen?" Either I am mistaken in my method, or he will answer me pretty nearly as follows:
>
> "What course have I chosen! To remain what you have made me." (IV:855, Émile 471)

That Émile's assent is necessary for the confirmation of the educator's choices suggests that independence of judgment is valued only in particular contexts, namely, those in which the individual confronts the "vulgar maxims" of society (IV:662, *Émile* 333). When at the end of the book Émile takes leave of his educator, he duly endorses his education and hopes that he and his young wife Sophie will be able to bring up their own child in the same way. He addresses his educator as "master," inviting him to remain the master: "Advise us and govern us. We shall be docile. As long as I live, I shall need you" (IV:868, *Émile* 480). What remains lacking from this happy picture of spontaneous accord and willing submission is any trace of the insight of the *First Discourse*, that people can be *mistaken* about the nature of the good. This insight, which is the core premise guiding his criticism of contemporary society, is precisely what Rousseau appears to forget in his insistent demand for consensus.

Why, then, does Rousseau prioritize cohesion and unanimity in his political proposals? There is of course the desideratum of political stability and the indivisibility of sovereignty, which he shares with Diderot. The deeper cause, however, I will now argue, is his residual skepticism about our capacity to determine the good without reference to the customs and practices of a particular community. The background for this skepticism must be sought in his reflections on human nature in the *Second Discourse*. There, he argues that the selfishness and vanity of "civilized" man are deformations of the fundamental force of self-preservation, or "love of oneself," which in the presocial state coexists with, and is modulated by, a disinclination to inflict suffering, or *pitié*. Yet his account of *amour de soi* reveals that, while human beings have no fixed negative characteristics, they are eminently corruptible. Not only does human nature prove unstable, in the Diderotian sense of "malleable," but the concern with the well-being of others seems to be the comparatively weaker instinct in us. The best course for reversing the historical trajectory of perfectibility described in the *Discourse*, therefore, is the "annihilation" (III:381–82, *SC* 32) of our natural, self-regarding traits.[55] This recommendation already bodes ill for the preservation of the individual within the social whole. The violent terms that Rousseau employs here suggest that the social identity of the citizens is not an extension but a radical transformation of their personal identity. It is, however, in his emphasis on a common sense of belonging that Rousseau's skepticism manifests itself. On his account, unaided reason, that is, reason without the help of a homogeneous culture and a set of antecedent commitments, is insufficient

decisively and fully to determine the common good. It is essential, however, for his proposals that there be no wavering or disagreement about the good, for the general will cannot have more than one object, otherwise it loses its authority. Given this tight link between legitimacy, moral impeccability, and choice of ends, every disagreement must a fortiori be the result of a failure to consult the general will, and not the expression of a legitimate but nonetheless alternative view of the good. This is the deeper reason why Rousseau seeks to eliminate any sources of contention and stipulates the need for a unified culture; that is, not because of his supposed illiberal "instincts,"[56] but because he seeks to resolve a philosophical problem about the determination of the good.

As we have already seen, however, the determination of the good is not only a philosophical problem for Diderot and Rousseau, but also a pressing political and social one. This political and social dimension provides a bridge between their work and the more narrowly focused discussion about the meaning and aims of *Aufklärung*, which takes place in Germany and to which I turn next. This narrowing of focus enables the German authors not only to pose the problem of criticism and of authority in a historically deliberate manner, but also to couple it explicitly with the question of enlightenment. As we shall see, at stake in the debate about the meaning of enlightenment is the question of whether enlightenment fits with and enhances, or is inimical to the common culture. Fundamentally, this is a question about the compatibility of intellectual freedom and the public good. In a famous letter to the public censor, Voltaire tactfully suggests that it is not the business of a state functionary to be an arbiter of taste. He argues that the state ought to allow the bad as well as the good and that it is up to the "man of taste" to read only what is good.[57] By placing the responsibility for choosing "the good" on the individual, Voltaire is able to present freedom of the press as a necessary condition for the individual's exercise of his critical faculties. The capacity for discrimination is enhanced, rather than weakened, through contact with material of various quality. A more pessimistic view is expressed by the Abbé Dinouart, who argues that far from contributing to the creation of a robustly discriminating sense, the abundance of material critical of the government and of religion, which has reached "epidemic" proportions,[58] has a corrosive effect on moral and social values and thus disables individual decision making. The two positions I examine next represent a compromise solution to this conflict between intellectual freedom and the public good, giving the philosopher a mediating role between the realm of ideas, which remains free of external constraints, and the public domain, in which the priorities are cohesion and harmony.

5. Mendelssohn, Reinhold, and the Limits of Enlightenment

Lewis White Beck neatly encapsulates the differences between the French, English, and German Enlightenment:

> In France, religious and political dissent was practised and persecuted; in England, practised but not persecuted; in Germany, not practised and therefore not persecuted (except in rare instances).[59]

The view that the German Enlightenment was apolitical has been challenged in a number of more recent studies, which examine in great detail the complex processes of politicization of German society in the eighteenth century and the political dimension of contemporary German thought.[60] As I will be arguing in this section the very question, what is "enlightenment"? turns out to be a profoundly political one. Nonetheless, Beck's succinct summary conveys something of the circumspect and politically subdued character of the German Enlightenment. Therefore, before turning to examine Mendelssohn's and Reinhold's contributions to the debate on enlightenment proper, I want briefly to consider the context in which this debate emerged and was allowed to flourish.

An important forum for debate was provided by the various secret societies whose members often held important positions in the Prussian administration. Representative in this respect is the constitution of the Berlin Society of Friends of Enlightenment—otherwise known as the Wednesday Society—which, in the words of one of its members, was a society of "sensible professional men."[61] While some of the opinions held by those men were not circulated outside the society, others were published eponymously in the society's own journal, the *Berlinische Monatsschrift*, in which Kant, though not a member, was a regular contributor. As enlightened men who were also government officials, professors, and preachers, the members of such societies, which were at the vanguard of the German Enlightenment, had to reconcile the exigencies of their professional calling with their commitment to the movement and to the dissemination of its ideas. While inhibiting in many respects, this direct confrontation of issues of responsibility and accountability created the conditions for raising important philosophical questions about the nature of public argument, its aims and audience. An audience composed of one's fellow members in a secret society, for instance, would have different expectations and place different constraints on the speaker than the audience addressed through journals, pamphlets, and periodicals, which reached across confessional and regional barriers to a slowly emerging but still diffuse "learned class." It seems then that the

very constraints that impeded the emergence of political radicalism in Germany provided the conditions for the development of a sustained reflection upon the nature and practices of enlightenment. The concerns with the legitimacy of public criticism, the authority to which one appeals and to which one is accountable, when voicing one's opinions in public, and the constitution of the "real" public, which are central to Kant's discussion of enlightenment, define the "reflective turn" of the German Enlightenment.

The political context in which developed these characteristically reflective concerns was that of the "enlightened absolutism" of Frederick II. Absolutism, however qualified, is at odds with the socially and politically emancipatory content of Enlightenment thinking. Even if we view Enlightenment as a purely intellectual movement directed toward the search for knowledge, its nonexclusive conception of human cognitive capacities is already incipiently democratic and anti-authoritarian. Yet, under the reign of Frederick II, the unlikely combination of enlightenment and absolutism proved sufficiently stable to create conditions of intellectual flourishing, if not political dissent.[62] Indicative of how Frederick II understood his role is his relation with Christian Wolff, whose services he sought to retain by appointing him as his "secret counsellor." Frederick II describes this arrangement:

> It is the role of the philosophers to be the teachers of the universe and the masters of princes. Their task is to think well, it is for us to perform great actions. They must instruct the world through reason, we by our example. They should discover, we should practice. [63]

This letter offers an important insight into Frederick II's conception of his role. He carefully separates the domains of theory and practice, arguing that the philosopher should concern himself with thinking alone, leaving the domain of action to the prince. In reality, however, this separation limits only the philosopher's role and not that of the prince. Though he places himself under the intellectual tutelage of the philosopher, the prince remains the philosopher's superior: he has both the political power that the philosopher lacks and the knowledge that is beyond the reach of the uneducated masses. As Werner Schneiders points out, it is precisely this union of knowledge and power that makes him an *enlightened* king.[64] The enlightened subject, by contrast, is instructed to "argue but obey." By adopting this as his motto, the enlightened king licenses free debate while unequivocally asserting the political authority of him who issues this license.

The dialectic of freedom and restraint encapsulated in Frederick II's motto shapes the German debate about the meaning of enlighten-

ment, which provokes a variety of responses. Both the works I discuss here, Mendelssohn's "On the Question, What does it mean 'to enlighten'?" and Reinhold's "Thoughts on Enlightenment" deal as much with the politics of Enlightenment as with the semantics of enlightenment. In their work, the problems of criticism and of philosophical authority, which we encountered in the previous sections, are treated within an explicitly practical context. In this they reflect the broader concerns of those German *Aufklärer* who, in attempting to distinguish between "true" and "false" Enlightenment, sought to preempt the conclusion that the Enlightenment's promise of intellectual emancipation would materialize in social division and political anarchy. By addressing the underlying theme of the potential conflict between intellectual and political authority, they touch thus upon the uneasy union of knowledge and power of enlightened absolutism itself.[65] Mendelssohn and Reinhold are cautious in their defense of Enlightenment. They thus avoid the difficulty confronted by many champions of "true" enlightenment of having to show that, though unprecedented, its effects will be "advantageous to humanity" in the long run and thus not be feared but welcomed. One strategy, which is documented by Rudolf Vierhaus, was to offer a very abstract description of the nature of those gains and present a highly idealized view of the public that is to be the addressee and beneficiary of true enlightenment.[66] As Ursula Becher shows, however, this strategy proved self-defeating because it led to a hollowing out of the term "enlightenment," which became a mere slogan devoid of any content, either beneficial or dangerous.[67] An alternative strategy, represented here by Mendelssohn's and Reinhold's essays, was to confront directly the anxieties of the critics of Enlightenment by addressing openly the question of its limits. I will be arguing that this strategy also fails, because of its inadequate treatment of this very question.

Mendelssohn's and Reinhold's essays date from 1784, the same year as Kant's essay on enlightenment.[68] Although, from a historical perspective, their publication coincides with the waning and dispersal of the movement's vital forces,[69] philosophically, these articles represent the height of what I called earlier the "reflective phase" of the German Enlightenment. Both authors seek to offer an account of Enlightenment that defends the philosophical ambition of rational enquiry into truth, while at the same time providing a realistic account of the benefits that may accrue from such theoretical gains and of the public that is to enjoy them. In doing so, they respond both to conservative critics, who saw enlightenment as a threat to religious belief and political stability, and to those who considered its rationalist bias as

restrictive and misguided. Although they develop the theme of limits in different ways, they see clearly that it is essential to the question, what is enlightenment? This is because the question, what is enlightenment? arose in conjunction with issues concerning the effects of its dissemination in the wider society and the extent to which this process should be regulated. Enlightenment became fully reflective once it was asked to account for itself, once the question was put forth as to whether there *ought* to be any limits to a process, which, in principle, may only be "bound" by its completion, namely, the achievement of full enlightenment. Mendelssohn and Reinhold answer in the negative: enlightenment ought to be free. At the same time, they make clear that enlightenment does not happen in a vacuum, but has a social and cultural context that must be taken into account if its practical effects, in moral and social matters, are to be positive. Though Mendelssohn's argument is, as Alexander Altmann suggests, more circumspect and "finely weighted,"[70] both he and Reinhold present enlightenment as an essential part of the good life for a human being and aim to show how its essentially theoretical gains, as they see them, can bring practical benefits to all. Their vigorous defense of the enlightenment of the masses can be seen as a belated but direct response to an essay competition organized in 1778 by the Royal Academy of Arts and Sciences on the topic of "whether it is to the advantage of the common mass of humanity to be deceived, insofar as they are led into new errors or kept within their customary ones."[71] Viewed with contemporary eyes, the question appears rather curious. For in claiming that deception necessarily leads the "common mass of humanity" into error, the question appears to answer itself: no advantages can result from deception. Indeed, it seems that the options that are open to the common people are rather limited: they have to choose between old or new errors. The underlying assumption would appear to be that the common people are unable to exercise sound judgment. They either cling to their old mistaken beliefs or, seduced by new ideas, they fall into new misconceptions. Although the term "enlightenment" is not mentioned explicitly, the question is, and was taken to be, about the practical consequences of the spread of new ideas, especially in the domain of religion and of politics. It is precisely these concerns that Mendelssohn and Reinhold seek to address in their essays.

Essential to Mendelssohn's argument is the contrast between civilization (*Kultur*) and enlightenment. Civilization, he argues, has to do with "goods, freedom and beauty in artefacts, the arts, and social manners (objectively); with skill, diligence, and talent in some, dispositions, drives, and habits in others (subjectively)" (*WHA* 115). Enlightenment, by contrast, relates to the "theoretical domain" of "rational knowledge

(obj.) and ability (subj.) to reflect rationally about matters of human life, according to their importance and influence on human destiny" (115). On an earlier occasion, during a session of the Wednesday Society devoted to the 1778 essay topic, Mendelssohn again associates enlightenment with theoretical pursuits, arguing that "the discovery of eternal truths is in and for itself good" and that no limits may be imposed on it either by law or by the censors, for this would cause "greater harm than the most unbound freedom."[72] Although the question of the wider effects of enlightenment is hardly broached during this discussion, it becomes central to the essay. Here, Mendelssohn introduces the concepts of "civilization" and of "culture" (*Bildung*) as necessary complements of enlightenment. He advises that enlightenment should be tempered by an equal growth of civilization for this is the only way to achieve a coherent culture. This should not be seen, however, as an abandonment of the original position that enlightenment should remain unregulated. The purpose of the introduction of the perspective of culture is to draw attention to the *social* framework in which human activities, including the search for truth, take place. Mendelssohn is thus able to offer an account of the social conditions in which freedom is best exercised. In practice, this means that limits *are* desirable, but at a further remove. While one should not infringe upon the process of discovery of "eternal truths," this process, which is "in and of itself good," should not be viewed as an *end* in itself. Rather, it must be placed in the broader context of what Mendelssohn calls the "destiny of man" as man *and* as citizen (*WHA* 116).

In his defense of enlightenment, Mendelssohn first seeks to diffuse its novelty. This is to undercut an assumption held in common both by its critics, who warned of the dangers of new ideas, and by its uncritical supporters, who held extravagant expectations of progress. By denying that enlightenment is a new phenomenon, he is able to redirect the discussion away from speculation about what is to come, which fuels both the fears of the critics and the hopes of the supporters, toward the issue of good practice, which is his chief concern. His essay begins with an oblique reference to the 1778 competition topic, arguing that the "common mass of humanity scarcely understand" the words "enlightenment," "civilisation," and "culture" (*Aufklärung*, *Kultur*, *Bildung*) because they are "new arrivals in our language" (*WHA* 115). He insists, however, that the things these new words signify are not "new to us"; the ancient Greeks, he argues, for instance, had both enlightenment and civilization, attributes that made them a "cultured (*gebildete*) nation" (*WHA* 116). The issue then, for Mendelssohn, is not how each of these different domains of human activity should be regulated, but

rather, how they should coexist as "modifications of social life" (*WHA* 115). On his account, good practice within each domain depends on whether or not, taken together, these "modifications" form a balanced and well-integrated whole. "It is difficult," he admits, "but not impossible, to find the boundaries that separate use from misuse" (*WHA* 118). In warning against the misuse of both enlightenment and civilization, Mendelssohn in fact warns against letting any one element of *Bildung* atrophy, for however noble these pursuits, they can also be corrupted and corrupting: "the more noble a thing is in its perfection, the more hideous it becomes when it decays" (118). We see then that although the notion of social good is central to his account, he does not appeal to it to justify any curbs to the process of enlightenment, simply because enlightenment forms an *integral* part of this social good.

To what extent, however, is it possible to guide enlightenment, without reneging on the commitment to keep it free of limits? As we saw, Mendelssohn defines enlightenment as a theoretical pursuit that has to do with rational enquiry and the search for truth. Misuse of enlightenment occurs when, losing sight of its limits, enlightenment encroaches upon the domain that pertains to civilization, which is generally "oriented toward practical matters," including ethics, manners, and the arts (*WHA* 115). While the relation between the two is presented in terms of the relation between theory and practice, civilization is not subordinate to enlightenment. We can form a better idea of this relation by comparing how each contributes to the destiny of "man as man" and to the destiny of "man as citizen." The destiny of man, Mendelssohn argues, is "to develop all the powers and aptitudes of their mind and body";[73] it concerns therefore the education of the individual. The destiny of man as citizen, by contrast, concerns the individual as a member of the social whole; it has to do with one's social "standing and profession," and attendant "duties and rights" (*WHA* 116). Civilization, which "man as man does not need," is highly relevant to every aspect of this social being of citizens, with their "destinies as members of society" (116). The point of this distinction is to show that the horizon of theoretical endeavors is not, or *should* not be delimited by the problems and questions internal to those endeavors, but rather that there is a wider social domain in which these endeavors are embedded and which places upon us demands that must also be satisfied. This is what culture or *Bildung* is—namely, the "social condition of a people" who harmoniously pursue their destiny as men *and* citizens with "skill and diligence" (*WHA* 115). Enlightenment and civilization are aspects of culture, a concept that embraces both without being reducible to either. "Culture" is not a descriptive term. Rather it serves

to delineate an ideal boundary for the development of enlightenment and civilization. Outside this ideal boundary—that is, when developed independently and not as constituent parts of a more comprehensive conception of the social good—enlightenment and civilization can both be injurious, leading respectively to "stubbornness, egoism, irreligion, and anarchy," and to "luxury, hypocrisy, weakness, superstition, and slavery" (*WHA* 118). By contrast, "where enlightenment and civilisation go forward with an equal step, they mutually shield each other against such corruption" (118).

How does this "mutual shield" against corruption differ from the limits Mendelssohn considers unacceptable? In a letter written contemporaneously with the enlightenment essay, Mendelssohn acknowledges the fears of those he calls the "zealots," who view enlightenment with suspicion, and asks: "Can enlightenment be injurious?"[74] "Only contingently," he replies, like "sunlight falling on dull eyes."[75] Those who seek to restrain enlightenment for fear of its effects, he argues, propose a cure that is "in every respect and under all circumstances far more harmful than the most untimely enlightenment."[76] Yet, the possible harm that can come from enlightenment is an issue that clearly concerns Mendelssohn. What is novel in his approach is that instead of issuing guidelines or rules of good use, he invites his readers to consider enlightenment and its effects in the round, that is, not in isolation, as the zealots and censors do. He is thus able to reinscribe the problems of which the zealots warn within the broader social and cultural context and to present them as clashes between enlightenment and civilization. Such clashes, however, cannot be resolved by prioritizing enlightenment over civilization, or vice versa, thus using one as the ultimate arbiter of the other. This is because they are symptoms of the disharmonious or unequal growth of the two. They constitute, in short, a failure of *culture*. It is a mistake therefore to diagnose this failure exclusively in terms of the excess of enlightenment, without paying attention to the comparative contraction of civilization. This is the reason for resisting the proposed remedy, namely the imposition of artificial limits on enlightenment. This is also the reason why Mendelssohn cannot offer a formula or prescription for avoiding such frictions, suggesting that it is ultimately a matter for the judgment of individual *Aufklärer*, whom he urges to proceed with "prudence and caution" (*WHA* 119).

The judgment of the *Aufklärer* plays a key role in Reinhold's "Thoughts on Enlightenment." Reinhold takes issue with the suggestion of the 1778 essay competition that the masses are unfit for enlightenment and that deception is useful, and boldly defends the right of all classes to enlightenment. Against those who claim that it has deprived

the people of their "partly harmless, partly useful errors without having being able to give them anything better in their stead" (*Gedanken* 20), he argues that enlightenment brings tangible benefits and contributes to human happiness. In characteristically impassioned tones, he urges that the light, which has "conquered the highest regions of the world of ideas," be allowed to shine where "deep darkness" reigns still, there "where men live and toil" (*Gedanken* 8). Aware that he has to convince the doubters that this is indeed a desirable prospect, Reinhold shifts the weight of his argument from whether enlightenment is useful or not, to how its ideas should be disseminated. This is where the judgment of those who are already enlightened plays a vital role, for it is they who are entrusted with communicating the new ideas to the people in a suitable form. Reinhold accepts the intellectual hierarchy tacitly assumed in the 1778 essay topic, that enlightenment is a top-down process, and appeals to it in order to placate the fears of the critics who consider enlightenment as a destructive force that shatters belief and encourages sedition. His main concern, however, is with the practice of enlightenment itself, that is to say, not the manner of application of enlightened ideas, but rather the manner in which these ideas reach the people. It is this that he terms "popular enlightenment" (*Volksaufklärung*).

Reinhold begins with a very general definition of enlightenment, as what turns "into rational men those who are capable of reason" (*Gedanken* 123). Since "the greater part of humanity brings as many capacities in the world as it needs to become wise" (*Gedanken* 235), everybody can benefit from enlightenment and become rational. Becoming rational, however, is an ampliative process: one needs to grasp and to accumulate "distinct (*deutlich*) concepts" (*Gedanken* 124). Consequently, the more one accumulates distinct concepts, the more rational one becomes. Thus, Reinhold concludes, the "enlightened individual," considered now as an *exemplarily* rational individual, is redefined as one "whose reason is noticeably above the ordinary" (*Gedanken* 124). Does this mean then that enlightenment is, after all, beyond the reach of the ordinary man? Given Reinhold's perfectionist conception of rationality, we cannot answer this question by seeking the end point of our cognitive endeavors, for, presumably, each achieves according to his natural endowment and circumstances. What matters, rather, is the entry point, and here Reinhold is adamant that enlightenment is for all. However, and here is the key difference, it is not the same for all. There is what we might call the "professional" enlightenment of those who study metaphysics and moral philosophy. Reinhold describes how these pursuits replaced the "religion of faith"

(*Glaubensreligion*), which sought refuge in mystery and obscurity, and scholastic logic, which held reason "captive" (*Gedanken*, 6). Whereas previously "we could only measure the correctness of our concepts by the logic of the Schools and the morality of our actions by religion alone" (*Gedanken* 3), now, thanks to the progress of "our metaphysics" and moral philosophy, we use "our reason" (*Gedanken* 7). The new philosophy has liberated mankind from errors and ignorance and ushered a new "culture of reason" (*Vernunftbildung*) (*Gedanken* 9). It should be noted, however, that this story of the emancipation of reason is not the story of the enlightenment of the people, but of the scholars; "our metaphysics" is *their* metaphysics. The question then is how the rational insights that make up the scholars' enlightenment can be appropriated by the people. For Reinhold, this is not a matter of mere dissemination of ideas. Rather it calls for a more profound transformation of theory into practice. What is required is that the distinct concepts of the specialists leave "the narrow circle of the learned" (*Gedanken* 8) and enter the world of "actual life" (*Gedanken* 6). The task is to find method of communication between the scholars and the people and build "bridges between speculation and action" (6).

Central to Reinhold's model of communication is the idea of a "middle concept." In contrast to the clear concepts of the scholars, which require specialized knowledge, middle concepts are accessible to the people because they draw upon preexisting popular beliefs and therefore are able to function as communication bridges between the "philosopher and the masses" (*Gedanken* 130). As an example of how this model of communication might work, Reinhold uses the idea of God. The philosopher, he argues, has a distinct concept of divine justice, whereas the people have a "confused" or "popular" idea of God's "unrelenting strictness" (*Gedanken* 131). To bring the people to share the distinct concept of divine justice, and thus to love rather than fear God, the philosopher can use a concept such as paternal love. This is familiar to the people and helps convey the idea that "God is a wise father" who "punishes only out of mercy" (*Gedanken* 131). In this way, the philosopher uses what Reinhold calls the "passive capacity" of the people and puts into their hands what he has rationally analyzed (*Gedanken* 128). Although he anticipates that the philosopher may not find these channels of communication or that he may not want to use them keeping certain truths secret from the masses, the break in communication will not be due to the failure of the masses to understand, "the fault is not the capacity of the masses to reason" (*Gedanken* 132). Reinhold's optimism about the success of the model of communication he proposes depends on his assumptions about the existence of a shared

culture, which functions as a repository of commonly held concepts from which the philosopher fashions the middle concepts. The philosopher communicates by using "concepts upon which all are agreed," Reinhold writes. It is because they are shared that they function successfully as channels of communication (*Gedanken* 132).[77] We see then that culture plays a double role in Reinhold's account. It has a unifying function, in that it brings together the philosopher and the masses by virtue of common concepts. It also has an enabling function, for it provides the masses with the means for their enlightenment. Reinhold's account, perhaps more than Mendelssohn's, relies on assumptions about the social and cultural framework of enlightenment, assumptions which bear directly on the question of limits: people should have unrestricted access to enlightenment, provided they have ready access to common concepts, provided, that is, they share a culture and belong to a "cultured nation" (*Gedanken* 131 and 236).

Reinhold's proposal for popular enlightenment combines a characteristically enlightened egalitarian conception of human cognitive capacities with a pragmatic awareness of the real difficulties and obstacles that stand on the way of the majority of the population of these cultured nations. He devotes a significant portion of his essay arguing that class should not be used as a criterion for fitness for enlightenment, because privilege palpably fails to correspond with merit. He is especially caustic about "fools from higher classes . . . who have earned the right to babble nonsense in the Senate" merely on account of an accident of birth (*Gedanken* 234). The greater mass of people, whose enlightenment concerns him here, do not suffer from deficiency of native intelligence, but from lack of opportunity and means:

> The deeper one descends into the lowest classes, the more obvious becomes the cause of ignorance and errors, the more salient becomes the lack of opportunity and means, and the number and strength of obstacles to a culture of reason. (Gedanken 233–34)

This is precisely why the enlightened philosophers stand under an obligation to teach the people. Indeed, this is what distinguishes them from the learned men of old who remained isolated in their researches, lost all connection with the world of the "common man," and considered popular concepts to be as "rude and ignorant as the people" themselves (*Gedanken* 5–6). Although Reinhold remarks that the masses "do not easily see any further than they are permitted to see" (*Gedanken* 129), he suggests that they might, nonetheless, be able to cross the bridges of communication that are open to them. If they remain in the dark, therefore, it is not because they lack the

capacity to reason, but rather because the philosopher has not been diligent enough in his search for common concepts and failed to locate those preexisting channels of communication embedded in the common culture.

We are now in position to see that both Mendelssohn's and Reinhold's defense of popular enlightenment incorporates, as an integral part of it, the idea that the pursuit of enlightenment is and must be bound by broader considerations of the social good. While neither accepts that any limits should be placed on the pursuit of truth, when it comes to putting theory to practice, that is, incorporating enlightenment to the social whole so as to improve the general condition of the people, this concern itself functions as a limiting clause. In both arguments references to a common culture are used to frame and circumscribe theoretical pursuits. Mendelssohn insists that enlightenment should remain unlimited because it is essentially good. However, in social terms, its goodness turns out not to be an end in itself, but rather conditional on other factors, such as the growth of civilization. Reinhold advocates the unrestricted access of all to enlightenment. Yet he too makes clear that its practical benefits for the masses depend on how well the philosophers perform their mediating role between pure rational insights and the common culture. Although he describes popular enlightenment as a bridge between speculation and action, it is the philosophers who both speculate and act. The "action" demanded by the people is the absorption of the concepts that are communicated to them. The dyad of enlightened philosopher and unenlightened people, or of communicator and recipient of communication, which forms Reinhold's proposal for popular enlightenment, reproduces the dyad of rational insight and philosophical *theoros*, which he uses to define enlightenment in general. Despite its wide compass, therefore, Reinhold's enlightenment remains essentially a theoretical pursuit as it is for Mendelssohn. This theoretical slant, I want to argue now, influences the way they think of its limits.

Reinhold and Mendelssohn seek to address the question of the limits of enlightenment by showing how enlightenment can *become* practical and form part of public culture. The *Aufklärer* have a key role in this, for it is they who must strike the balance between existing beliefs and new ideas. On Reinhold's account, the enlightened philosophers, who belong to the new culture of reason, must return to the cave and use the old culture, which provides the readily available concepts upon which all agree, to further popular enlightenment. On Mendelssohn's account, the *Aufklärer* are to establish a "boundary" (*Grenzlinie*) between use and misuse of enlightenment through self-censorship: they

should refrain from publicizing a truth if they suspect that it might be morally detrimental.[78]

But is the role of the philosopher as educator and boundary setter convincing? I believe not. Mendelssohn and Reinhold offer what is fundamentally a prudential account of the limits of enlightenment and thus of the scope for criticism of existing beliefs. The final court of judgment is not the elusive public, but the *phronesis* of the enlightened; it is they who must choose from among the stock of available beliefs and they who decide which are useful, which may be disturbed, and which are best left alone. The judgment of the *Aufklärer* should be trusted because it is they who are in possession of knowledge and of the correct criteria for deciding what is good and what is not. If we ask, however, who are the enlightened?, who are those in the know? we find ourselves in a circle, for the *Aufklärer* are just those who have the requisite *phronesis*. Not only is this unsatisfactory, but philosophically it takes us a step back, falling behind Rousseau's and Diderot's finely self-aware investigations into the related questions of philosophical authority and the determination of the good. As we saw in the previous sections, Rousseau and Diderot are led to the conclusion that the good is not self-evident, because they take seriously not just competing philosophical accounts of it but also what we might call, retrospectively, the fact of value-pluralism, that is, that there is no readily established consensus about the good. This, in turn, both informs their philosophical positions and their difficult conception of the role of the philosopher as a critic *without* a secure foothold in the realm of rational insights. Mendelssohn and Reinhold fail to address these issues because they view culture as fundamentally unified and enlightenment as essentially *theoria*.

Mendelssohn and Reinhold's essays add, however, an important element to Enlightenment's reflective turn: by identifying culture as the horizon of enlightenment and the real public as the philosopher's necessary interlocutor, they raise forcefully the question of the social function of philosophical reflection, presenting the philosopher both as answerable to an audience and as carrying out obligations of communication. Of course, unless there is a way of defining critical philosophical reflection such that it avoids Diderot's skeptical conclusions, opening the way to Rousseau's effective exile of criticism from the *polis*, the challenge set by Mendelssohn and Reinhold to make enlightenment practical shall not be met. Put differently, the problem is not with defining the civic role of the philosopher, whether as critic who identifies the "errors that hold us captive" or as educator, but rather with the *authority* invoked in carrying out these tasks. This, in turn,

requires an account of the public that can act as standing jury, while also participating in its own enlightenment. As we shall see in the next chapter, Kant's interpretation of enlightenment in terms of the public use of one's reason provides us with just such an account that identifies criticism as the limit and touchstone of an enlightened public culture.

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Chapter 2

The Idea of a Culture of Enlightenment

1. Kant's Answer to the Question, What Is Enlightenment?

Kant's essay "An Answer to the Question, What Is Enlightenment?" is often read as a loosely argued manifesto that defends the "original imperative" of the freedom of thought.[1] My aim in this chapter is to show that Kant does much more in this short essay than merely restate this familiar Enlightenment *topos*. What he undertakes is nothing less than a *critique* of enlightenment through which he seeks to liberate the Enlightenment from the dogmatic certitudes of rationalism while offering a defense both of the legitimacy of the demand to think freely and of the rightful exercise of this freedom. Kant's recasting of the intellectual aspirations of the Enlightenment within a critical and practical framework offers a plausible and attractive solution to the problems of rational criticism we have outlined in the previous chapter. The main task of this chapter is to reconstruct the steps through which this critique is accomplished. This will require that we examine the connections that Kant establishes between freedom of thought and public address, rational argument and social practice, and criticism and the authority of reason.

Kant's subtle reworking of the emancipatory message of the Enlightenment begins with his interpretation of the rationalist motto *sapere aude*. This phrase, which derives originally from Horace[2] and which, translated literally, means "dare to know," was adopted in 1736 as the motto of the newly formed Wolffian "Society of the Friends of the Truth." By translating it as "have the courage to use your *own* understanding!" (VIII:35, *WE* 54), Kant effectively replaces

the search for knowledge with the search for intellectual independence. Enlightenment does not signify acquisition of knowledge or skills, as it does in Reinhold's and Mendelssohn's interpretations, but rather the capacity to abandon the state of "self-incurred immaturity." Still, this is not a straightforward call for intellectual emancipation. Rather, and here lies the originality of Kant's argument, what is required in order to throw off the yoke of immaturity is the freedom to make public use of one's reason, where "public" signifies a publicly conducted argument in which all can participate. With the introduction of the idea of the public use of one's reason, Kant transforms the debate about the meaning and limits of enlightenment in several ways. First, by interpreting enlightenment in terms of a form of argument in which, as we shall see, the actual participation of others is vital, he challenges the adequacy of the introspective model and dissociates enlightenment from *theoria*, the rational intuition of "distinct" concepts. Secondly, and as a direct result of the prioritization of argument over knowledge seeking, he shifts the terms of validation of this kind of intellectual exercise. At a single stroke, he renders irrelevant the highly problematic attempts to show that the theoretical gains of enlightenment are ultimately conducive to happiness and to virtue. With a new conception of enlightenment, a new kind of justification is called for. This justification, I will argue, forms part of the reflective examination and identification of the commitments attendant to the use of one's own reason. Thirdly, following from this, the complexion of the question of the limits of enlightenment also changes. One can no longer argue that while the search after truth and knowledge is a valuable end in itself, in view of the potentially socially disruptive effects of this pursuit, it should be limited to a few *phronimoi* scholars. This is because Kant interprets enlightenment already in terms of *public* argument. In this way, he dispenses with the notion that enlightenment must be implemented from above, and, at least in principle, opens it up to the hitherto excluded "common mass of people."

Fully to appreciate the significance of these transformations, it is important to reacquaint ourselves with the *questions* that are raised by Kant's answer to the question, what is enlightenment? which, as Michel Foucault points out, "beneath its appearance of simplicity, it is rather complex."[3] Foucault's own analysis of these complexities is especially useful because it focuses precisely on those features of the essay that account for the originality of Kant's argument.

Foucault begins by pointing at the peculiar historical horizon, or rather lack of it, of Kant's essay:

> *Aufklärung* is neither a world era to which one belongs, nor an event whose signs are perceived, nor the dawning of an accomplishment. Kant defines *Aufklärung* in an almost entirely negative way, as an *Ausgang*, an "exit" a "way out." . . . He is not seeking to understand the present on the basis of a totality or of a future achievement. He is looking for a difference: What difference does today introduce with respect to yesterday?[4]

Foucault is right to claim that Kant's conception of enlightenment is "almost entirely negative," for indeed it represents a shift from content (i.e., types or items of knowledge, skills, etc.) to form—namely, a manner of thinking. However, Kant's statement that we do not live in an enlighten*ed* age but rather in an "age of enlightenment" (VIII:40, *WE* 58) suggests that he is concerned with defining a process, of which, he claims, we have "distinct indications" (*deutliche Anzeigen*). While this is not a straightforward historical claim, as I show in the next chapter, this process of enlightenment—the "difference" that interests Foucault— has a clear historical dimension. Most importantly, the connection Kant establishes between freedom of thought and public address opens the conceptual space for considering the emergence and development of the social practices that flow from his almost, but not entirely, negative conception of enlightenment.

Next, Foucault focuses on the concept of "immaturity," which he interprets to mean "a certain state of our will that makes us accept someone else's authority to lead us in areas where the use of reason is called for."[5] Enlightenment, he argues, is thus "defined by a modification of the preexisting relation linking will, authority, and the use of reason."[6] This relation, he claims, "is presented by Kant in a rather ambiguous manner." On the one hand immaturity is described as a phenomenon in which one is caught up, on the other we are told that "man himself is responsible for his immature status."[7] Foucault's suggestion here, made more forcefully and explicitly by Hamann, is that the immature may not be entirely responsible for their predicament and that they may have to overcome much more than "laziness and cowardice" in order freely to employ their reason. While Foucault correctly sees that implicit in Kant's diagnosis of "self-incurred immaturity" is a link between thinking and doing, and also between freedom and responsibility, he stops short of investigating this link. On Kant's account, the free use of one's reason requires the recognition of the reflexive nature of the universalist demands of intellectual independence: one reasons for oneself, but one does not reason alone. This idea, and ideal, of intellectual independence, which already has a social dimension, complicates the diagnosis of self-incurred immaturity. Its

main function is to show that one's release from immaturity depends on the activation of capabilities that are perfectly within the ken of ordinary individuals engaged in ordinary interactions, and thus that the "ought" of intellectual independence is achievable. At the same time, there is a corresponding social side to immaturity as well; this is why it is not enough for the immature to seek to think for themselves, but, as Kant insists, that they be allowed the freedom to do so.

But, assuming that they are granted this freedom, what are the immature then to do? This again is not clear according to Foucault who points at a central ambiguity in Kant's interpretation according to which "Enlightenment must be considered both as a process in which men participate collectively and as an act of courage to be accomplished personally."[8] The claim is accurate but not probing enough: if we look in more detail at Kant's argument we find that it describes a dynamic relation between particular acts of independent thinking, the universal horizon of those acts, and the individuals who participate in the process of enlightenment. So what Foucault interprets as an ambiguity is in fact the outline of a dynamic model of enlightenment. When we examine the commitments of independent reasoning, it will become clear that the pursuit of one's own enlightenment has an irreducible social and practical dimension. On Kant's account, enlightenment cannot be just a personal project that each individual undertakes in isolation from others. Both at the level of principle and at the level of practice, enlightenment amounts to a test of one's capacity to acknowledge others as having an equal claim to intellectual independence. This is the deepest transformation that the concept of enlightenment undergoes in Kant's interpretation, for it no longer means the solitary struggle against error and superstition, but rather the effort to think *with* others.

A final question concerns Kant's use of the word "mankind" (*Menschheit*). "Are we to understand that the entire human race is caught up in the process of Enlightenment?" Foucault asks, "Or are we to understand that it involves a change affecting what constitutes the humanity of human beings?"[9] It seems indeed unclear whether "mankind" is used quantitatively, to mean that the entire human race is involved in the process of enlightenment, or qualitatively, to mean that one becomes human through enlightenment. Clarifying this is especially important because it is not simply a matter of deciding who is the addressee of the injunction "use your own understanding," but also of setting out the practical implications of Kant's conception of enlightenment. To do this, however, we should not follow Foucault who sees Kant's essay as essentially a historical piece, which provides "an analy-

sis of the social, political, and cultural transformations that occurred at the end of the eighteenth century."[10] As I show in the next section, the idea of the public use of reason is not descriptive, but normative. Furthermore, the strong connection Kant establishes between rational argument and social practice allows substantive commitments to flow from his conception of enlightenment as public reasoning. It thus becomes possible to envisage a distinctive *culture* of enlightenment, which in turn gives content to the idea of a life that is fitting for a human being, as a being capable of reasoning autonomously, or, in Kant's words, a being "who is *more than a machine*" (VIII:42, *WE* 60).

2. A New Approach to Independent Thinking

The task of ridding one's mind of superstition and prejudice is sometimes described by Enlightenment writers as a kind of growing up, as an intellectual coming of age. As Hans Blumenberg has pointed out, however, the metaphor of "the organic growth of rationality or of the coming of light of day after the long night of its absence [has] an initial but not lasting plausibility."[11] Although references to growth and maturity successfully convey an increasing confidence and optimism about human reason, in relegating entire cultures or historical periods to the "childhood" of humanity, they also promote a misleading view of human history and achievement. These characteristic themes and convictions of the Age of Reason are readily evoked by Kant's claim that "Enlightenment is man's emergence from self-incurred immaturity" (VIII:35, *WE* 54). These appearances are misleading, however. Read carefully, Kant's essay reverses these expectations at almost every step of the argument, providing instead a critical reinterpretation both of the metaphors of Enlightenment self-understanding and of the meaning of "enlightenment."

The first of those reversals concerns the metaphor of immaturity itself, which is not used to signify a state of ignorance, of prejudice, or superstition. Rather, it is "the inability to use one's own understanding without the guidance of another" (VIII:35, *WE* 54). Kant argues that this impairment is "self-incurred" because it is not the result of a lack of understanding, but rather of a "lack of resolution and courage" (VIII:35, *WE* 54). In other words, the term "self-incurred immaturity" implies simultaneously *both* the capacity *and* the failure to use one's own understanding. The structure of this concept resembles the structure of the concept of the pathological determination of the will, which Kant introduces in the *Critique of Pure Reason* in order to explain the

idea of "practical" freedom (*CPR* A534/B562).[12] Here, he argues that while for animals sensuous impulses are irresistible, in human beings "sensibility does not necessitate" (*CPR* A534/B562) in the same way. The human will is an *arbitrium sensitivum liberum*, which means that it is "pathologically affected" (*CPR* A534/B562), that is, affected by sensuous motives, but it is not constrained by them. The purpose of this distinction is to establish that human agents have "a power of self-determination independently of any coercion through sensuous impulses" (*CPR* A534/B562). Because they enjoy this practical freedom, they are imputable for their actions, even when they behave as if sensuous motives *were* necessarily compelling. The parallel with the concept of self-incurred immaturity has an important implication for Kant's conception of enlightenment. Rational insight and theoretical accomplishment, which are central for both Mendelssohn and Reinhold, become of secondary importance as Kant places enlightenment directly into the domain of the "practical" (*das Praktische*), which on Kant's account is a domain involving choosing and willing.[13] In short, both enlightenment and immaturity are now seen as a matter of choice. This is further underlined in Kant's designation of the immature as *naturaliter maiorennes*. This is a legal term used to describe "those who have come of age by virtue of nature."[14] It indicates that, at a particular stage of a person's natural development, he or she should be recognized by law as an adult and thus as no longer in need of guidance and supervision. The contrast in law is with those who are designated as needing a *tutor*, a guide or protector. In parallel with those who act on sensuous impulses, the immature, while able to exercise their own judgment, continue to behave as if they were in need of guidance. This voluntary tutelage, Kant claims, has become almost like a second nature to them and has developed into the habit of letting others, those whom he calls the "guardians," provide ready answers to questions about how one should live and what one should believe (VIII:35, *WE* 54). The equivalent to "pathological determination" here is determination by the guardians, whose role can be performed by an individual such as a doctor or a spiritual adviser, but also by a book, a dogma, or even a formula. The first step out of immaturity, therefore, consists in ridding oneself of one's guardians.

Kant insists that emancipation from external guidance is both a possible and a desirable goal. Indeed, he claims that it is the "duty (*Beruf*) of all men to think for themselves" (VIII:36, *WE* 55). But is Kant right to reject the need for guardians? One may ask, for instance, whether it would be foolish *not* to defer occasionally to the opinion of the expert or the specialist.[15] To use one of Kant's own examples, it

does not seem senseless in matters of diet to ask the doctor for his opinion. The call to use one's own understanding on matters about which one knows little or nothing would render the Enlightenment motto "Have the courage to use your *own* understanding!" empty and perfunctory. Indeed, if we decide as a matter of principle to refuse to consult someone who has superior knowledge and experience in a particular field, our courage can easily border on the foolhardy. However, what Kant asks us to reject, or at least place in doubt, is not the knowledge or expertise of the guardians but the kind of authority they embody. To do so is to take the first step in the process of learning to acknowledge a different form of authority, the authority of reason. Intellectual independence, Kant suggests, is a two-step process: the first step consists in emancipating oneself from the authority of the guardians, the second in learning to recognize the authority of reason. It is both those steps that make up what Kant describes as the "free movement" of those who cast away the "ball and chain" of immaturity (VIII:36, *WE* 55).

But why does putting ourselves under the authority of reason render us free and intellectually independent? To find Kant's answer to this, we need to examine first in what this authority consists. It is not the authority of Reinhold's "rational men," the enlightened philosophers, nor that of the members of the learned academies who, as Samuel Formey reports, were viewed by the "literate public" as modern "oracles."[16] In short, Kant does not propose that the immature replace one set of beliefs with another more rational or enlightened one. This is because, on Kant's account, the problem does not lie with the source, content, or consequences of the advice one receives from the guardians. Rather, the problem regards the *form* of the relationship between guardian and ward or, more specifically, the type of authority that this relationship exemplifies. Kant's main objection is that the authority exercised by the guardians is such that it encourages the systematic and habitual abandonment of the ward's own critical faculties. As Kant observes, the officer says "Don't argue, get on parade!" The tax official says "Don't argue, pay!" The priest says "Don't argue, believe!" (VIII:37, *WE* 55). In other words, this is a type of authority that not only demands but also depends on unquestioning compliance; it affords the ward no opportunity for critical evaluation of the guardian's commands or of the guardian's warrant to authority.

The proposed alternative is based on the freedom to debate. Kant describes no method or rules for the guidance of one's understanding. This, however, is obviously problematic because it appears to imply that the authority of reason is tantamount to absence of authority.

How then does Kant seek to defend this model? He begins the essay by urging us to have the courage to use our *own* understanding, and then, instead of proceeding to elaborate the method or rules necessary for the proper conduct of one's own understanding, he makes the rather opaque claim that for the people to learn to think for themselves, "all that is needed" (VIII:36, WE 55) is the freedom to make public use of reason in all matters. In short, he omits to explain the precise nature of the connection, which clearly he considers to be a vital one, between public reasoning and the use of one's own understanding. The oddity of Kant's position becomes more striking when we consider the Cartesian model of independent thinking presented in the *Discourse on the Method for Rightly Conducting the Reason and Searching for Truth in the Sciences*. The method mentioned in the title consists in an introspective process of systematic doubt by means of which Descartes seeks to eliminate uncertainties and to secure firm foundations for progress in both scientific and metaphysical enquiries. The key assumption that guides this project is the belief that all human beings are equally endowed with *bon sens*, that is, the capacity to make sound judgments and to distinguish truth from error. Error and disagreement, Descartes argues, are due not to variations in the capacity to reason, but to variations in the reasoning process; therefore, in order to judge soundly and truthfully, it is necessary that we adopt a proper method for conducting our reason. While Kant shares this egalitarian conception of human cognitive powers, he appears to disregard altogether the question of method, asserting simply that freedom to debate in public is all that is needed. I will be arguing, however, that this is not an omission on Kant's part. This is because the freedom to argue in public is a structured freedom. To discover this structure, we need to identify the normative constraints that are implicit in the concept of a "public use of reason." Although the concept is frequently invoked in the literature, it is rarely treated as having normative meaning.[17] This is a serious oversight, however, for unless we identify the ways in which public argument is principled argument, we should lose any connection between it and independent reasoning, for one can just as freely be the mouthpiece of a guardian as to voice his or her own thoughts.

Kant defines the public use of reason as "that use which anyone may make of [reason] as a man of learning addressing the entire reading public" (VIII:37, *WE* 55). It possesses two key features: it is public and it is inclusive. Irrespective of rank or occupation, all are equally invited to participate. The citizen who believes that the tax system is unfair may "publicly voice his thoughts," the officer who believes that the military service pursues a mistaken policy must, similarly, be able to

submit his observations "to his public for judgment." Neither needs a special qualification or license to speak; each speaks simply as a "member of a complete commonwealth or even a cosmopolitan society" (VIII:37, *WE* 56).

The second feature of public reasoning, publicity, has consequences that are made explicit in another of Kant's examples: that of a priest addressing his congregation. Although the priest speaks in public and performs a public function, he is nonetheless described as making a "private" use of his reason. As both Thomas Auxter and Onora O'Neill have pointed out, Kant does not use "private" synonymously with "individual perspective,"[18] to refer to the "merely individual or personal."[19] However, the meaning Auxter gives to "private,"—namely that which falls short of the "complete development of human capacities and the attainment of moral goals,"[20]—is not applicable in this context, for we are told nothing here of moral achievement, or of the development of our talents. What is at issue, in the first instance at least, is simply the freedom to speak in public. It is more appropriate, therefore, to think of "private" as signifying a limitation imposed upon the speaker, which amounts to a *privation* (*privus* has both the meaning of "peculiar to oneself, private, individual" and that of "deprived of, destitute"). What limits the priest is his role; as Kant says, he is "employed to expound in a prescribed manner and in someone else's name" (VIII:38, *WE* 56). Thus although he may be thinking his own thoughts, he does not, indeed, *should* not, speak them. To make public use of his reason, the priest, just like the officer and the citizen in Kant's other examples, must make "use of his *own* reason and speak in his *own* person," and this he can succeed in doing only when he addresses the "the *real* public (i.e., the world at large)" (VIII:38, *WE* 57; emphasis added). It transpires, therefore, that the public use of reason is inclusive not just in the sense that "anyone may make it," that everyone is encouraged to consider oneself as a potential public speaker, but also in that the addressee just *is* "the world at large."

However, if the "real" public is nothing less than the world at large, it would seem that hardly ever, hardly anyone makes truly public use of one's reason, since usually their audience is limited. One way of interpreting the requirement for unrestricted audience is, as O'Neill does, in terms of "publicizability." A publicizable communication, she argues, is "in principle accessible to the world at large and can be debated without invoking authority."[21] The idea here is that a communication that presupposes some authority will either fail to reach those who do not share this basic presupposition or will be disputed by them. The key element is not actual publicity but accessibility in principle:

"communications that cannot, however disseminated, reach those who do not accept or assume some authority are not full uses of reason at all."[22] The advantage of this interpretation is that it makes explicit the hidden "ought" in the idea of public use of reason. The problem with it is that it raises more questions than it answers. First, the idea of a "full use of reason" suggests a contrast with a partial or incomplete use that is absent from Kant's formulation, which is not about degree but rather about a form of reasoning. Most importantly, it is not clear how we are meant to judge the "reach" of a communication. Accessibility in principle is an unsatisfactory criterion because it is difficult to assess whether, though bona fide, our communication may not in fact involve some presupposition of authority, such that will alienate part of our audience. Indeed, it is often the case that reliance on such presuppositions, which might have to do with our background, adherence to a doctrine, or simply admiration for someone—what Kant calls a "prejudice of prestige" (IX:77, *Logic* 580)—can only be identified in the course of argument. Moreover, as we shall see in the next section, Kant views disagreement as playing a vital role in reasoning. O'Neill's interpretation must be rejected therefore for two reasons. First, it renders the "ought" of publicizability unduly elusive, making the public use of reason an impossibly demanding proposal, rather than a practice that, as portrayed in Kant's text, is within our compass and shapes our "learned" but ordinary communications. Secondly, by interpreting publicity in terms of publicizability, O'Neill collapses publicity and inclusion into a single principle. As a result, she overlooks what is distinctive about the *principle* of publicity and underestimates the importance of the *practice* of "making public," which she identifies with mere "dissemination." To understand Kant's claims concerning the connection between public address and independent thinking, however, we need both to distinguish between inclusion and publicity and pay attention to the practice of public argument.

We can examine the nature of the requirement of inclusion by turning to "What Is Orientation in Thinking?" which postdates the essay on enlightenment by two years. Although the type of debate treated in this essay is of a specialist nature—the topic, Spinoza's pantheism, is clearly mainly of interest to philosophers[23]— Kant takes the opportunity to return to the subject of enlightenment and the requirements of intellectual independence. Arguing that it requires "less effort" than is imagined by those who equate it with knowledge, he defines enlightenment as follows:

> *To think for oneself* means to look within oneself (i.e., in one's own reason) for the supreme touchstone of truth; and the maxim of thinking for oneself at all times is *enlightenment.* (VIII:146, WO 249)

This definition appears to be in sharp contrast with the one given in the "Enlightenment" essay, in which public argument is central. If we ask, however, how the "touchstone of truth" tests arguments, we discover that Kant describes this reflective critical process in a way that gives us an important clue for interpreting the requirement of inclusion. The test of intellectual independence consists in the application of "a negative principle" in the use of one's cognitive powers:

> To employ one's own reason means simply to ask oneself, whenever one is urged to accept something, whether one finds it possible to transform the reason for accepting it, or the rule which follows from what is accepted, into a universal principle governing the use of one's reason. (VIII:146, WO 249)

Intellectual independence, the use of one's own reason, and the requirement of inclusion, that one should address the world at large, are brought together here in the form of a universalizability test to which we ought to submit our criteria for accepting or rejecting an argument "we are urged to accept." When we examine the merits of an argument, Kant maintains, we should at the same time examine what sort of criteria we use in our judgment and whether these can be considered as universally valid. Interpreted in terms of universalizability, the inclusion requirement appears as a test of an individual's thinking that simultaneously provides the normative horizon of the search for intellectual independence. It is therefore, as Kant claims, a "negative" test, because it does not determine the content of our thoughts but merely helps us to discover which of the criteria we use in accepting or rejecting an argument may be nonuniversalizable.

Why is inclusion, understood now as universalizability, a feature of intellectual independence? Why do we think freely when we examine our thoughts in this way? We can seek to understand how Kant envisages this connection by considering the negative effects of communications that are intentionally exclusive and hence private in Kant's terms. An interesting example of such a communication, given in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, is that of the parliamentary advocate who offers different arguments to different groups—"one argument for these, another for those" (*CPR* A789/B817)— in order to take advantage of his audience. By tailoring his argument to suit his audience, the advocate appeals to the particular reasons each happens to find attractive, thus bolstering the limits of their restricted horizon. Though no one is forcefully debarred from the process of reasoning, it is plausible to think that the reasoning of the advocate's audience is indeed curtailed because of the way they are being *addressed*. Still Kant does not offer here, any more than he does in the "Enlightenment" essay, an explanation of the relation between universalizability and the use of

one's own reason; he merely asserts that the former is essential to the latter.[24] It is possible that Kant intends universalizability to be understood as a test for the acceptability of a reason by other rational beings qua rational beings, in which case the application of the test to my own reasons would ensure conformity with the rational standard. However, even assuming that this is what universalizability stands for—that is, a rationality checkup—not only do we lack a defense of this position, but also face once again the problem we encountered with O'Neill's "publicizability" requirement; namely that it is too elusive. This is because, in applying the test to our thinking, we can never know for sure that we do not deceive ourselves or misunderstand "universally valid" for "acceptable to people like me." If, on the other hand, failing the test is immaterial—trying is all that counts—it is difficult to see how the test is at all *testing*, how it provides a critical structure to our reflection. A way forward is suggested by Kant's claim that in order to think independently and to think well, it is *not* sufficient to engage in the ideal reckoning with other rational thinkers described in the universalizability test. Reasserting that enlightenment involves the participation of the public, Kant argues that the freedom to communicate with real interlocutors is essential, for without it we lose our capacity even to *think* freely: "the same external constraint which deprives people of the freedom to communicate their thoughts in public also removes their freedom of thought" (VIII:144, *WO* 247). He stresses that freedom of thought depends on free communication, the freedom to think "in community with others to whom we communicate our thoughts and who communicate their thoughts to us" (VIII:144, *WO* 247). This suggests that publicity, in the sense of making something public, has a distinctive and important role to play in free thinking.

For a clue to the normative significance of publicity (*Publizität*) we need to look at two other of Kant's essays, "Theory and Practice" and "Perpetual Peace."[25] In "Theory and Practice," Kant connects publicity with the "freedom of the pen," especially in political matters. The people, he argues, must be allowed the freedom to judge "publicly" the proposed laws of the state (VIII:304, *TP* 85). In "Perpetual Peace," the scope and role of publicity are extended and publicity is presented as a *test* of right and wrong: "All actions affecting the rights of other human beings are wrong if their maxim is not compatible with their being made public" (VIII:381, *PP* 126). This test is again described as "purely *negative*" (VIII:381, *PP* 126) because it picks out only what is *not* right. The status of publicity in Kant's writings has been a matter of debate with some commentators arguing that it must be seen as a right that the people have (as it would appear, for instance, from the argu-

ment in "Theory and Practice"), while others that it is a moral duty of disclosure on the part of the government.[26] Here, I want to focus on Kant's claim that publicity is an a priori condition for rightful maxims.[27] Given that it can plausibly be interpreted as an empirical criterion of rightfulness,[28] why should Kant insist on an a priori connection between "publicly knowable" and rightful? The answer must be sought in Kant's conception of the legitimacy of a law.

Kant explains the idea of legitimacy or "rightfulness" (*Rechtmäßigkeit*) in a way that is clearly indebted to, but significantly different from, Rousseau's analysis of legitimate (*légitime*) government in the *Social Contract*. As we saw in the previous chapter, Rousseau's principle of legitimacy is based on the idea of an original contract. This yields the following guideline: a law is right if it is the expression of the general will legislating for the common good. With Kant things are otherwise. The guideline for the legislator is that he should "frame his laws in such a way that they could have been produced by the united will of a whole nation" (VIII:297, *TP* 79).[29] In this, the legislator "must regard each subject, insofar as he can claim citizenship, as if he had consented within the general will" (VIII:297, *TP* 79). The crucial change that Kant makes on the Rousseauean model is that laws are no longer produced by the united will of the people, but must be regarded *as if* they had been agreed by them. Kant thus replaces the need for actual agreement, which is the defining feature of Rousseau's participatory political model, with the idea of a possible agreement that functions as a limiting condition for the legislator. In this way, Kant not only eliminates the normative function of the idea of the common good, but also alters the nature of political obligation. In his model, the citizens do not stand under the obligation to legislate for the common good; rather it is the legislator who, acting on behalf of the citizens, stands under the obligation to make laws to which they can reasonably be expected to give their consent. Thus rearticulated, the principle of rightfulness holds that a law may not be imposed upon a people, if the people "could not possibly agree to it" (VIII:297, *TP* 79),[30] that is, if they would not freely have chosen to impose such a law upon themselves. It is this principle of rightfulness that Kant subsequently spells out in terms of publicity, arguing that an action affecting the rights of other human beings is wrong if its maxim cannot be declared publicly.[31] Therefore, although we could easily think of publicity as an empirical rule of thumb, a device by which people and legislator make sure that the basic legitimacy test is being carried out, Kant stresses its a priori character because it represents the final unfolding of the *non*empirical, and also nontrivial, conception of rightfulness contained in the idea of an original contract. It

articulates the basic *entitlement* that citizens have to judge matters that affect them.

What, then, is the relevance of publicity, thus understood, in the domain of public argument? First, it complements Kant's diagnosis that immaturity is self-incurred. The latter contains the idea that the failure to use one's own understanding is not the result of inability to do so. This diagnosis of thwarted or unexercised ability is complemented by the idea of the public's entitlement to exercise it. Second, because of the structure of the idea of rightfulness it articulates, publicity helps us with the puzzle over universalizability, why, that is, one is to look *within* oneself for the "supreme touchstone of truth" and yet at the same time must seek to base one's judgment on universalizable principles. We can begin to understand the idea that thinking for oneself is an other-directed activity by looking at the relation that publicity articulates between the judgment of the individual and the context of this judging process, which is one in which others have an *equal* title to judge for themselves. Of course, the demand for public scrutiny and accountability set out in the publicity test can easily degenerate into a demand for communications that are unthreatening, as Kant stipulates, but only because they are anodyne, or at worst demagogic.[32] This is why the principle of inclusion, which extends the horizon of communication to "the world at large," is an important complement of publicity, giving us an indication of the kind of public we should endeavor to address. Finally, publicity describes a practice of communication, which forms an integral part of Kant's reworking of the ideal of independent thinking and of his conception of enlightenment.

We are now better placed to understand Kant's claim that all that is needed for enlightenment is freedom to debate in public. This is not a claim about absence of boundaries, but rather a proposal to make use of a freedom that is structured by the requirements of inclusion and of publicity. Remarkably, and in contrast to other proposals we discussed in the previous chapter, we are told nothing of the purported advantages of enlightenment. Inclusion and publicity do not spell out maxims of benevolence, but rather the idea that the aspiration to think for oneself has an inclusive and public *structure*. Before examining Kant's reasons for arguing this, I want first to focus on the implications that flow from his interpretation of intellectual independence in terms of a public use of reason. The communicative and participatory dimension of this interpretation strongly suggests that the requirements of publicity and inclusion do not determine only singular and isolated acts of communication, but also a distinct domain of practice. The purpose of the next

section is to explore this domain of practice and examine its scope, function, and character.

3. The Culture of Enlightenment: Public Argument as Social Practice

A familiar and well-rehearsed criticism of the Enlightenment conception of the emancipation of reason is that the search for intellectual independence is predicated upon hostility toward culture, which is viewed with suspicion as a repository of unexamined and potentially irrational practices. It is argued that the goal of pure rational self-determination is premised on a necessary blindness to the particular cultural context from which such demands are issued in the first place. MacIntyre's invitation that we recognize the "rationality of traditions"[33] or Gadamer's attempt to rehabilitate prejudice, by reinvesting it with its original meaning of "preliminary judgment," are examples of projects that seek to counter this trend and to vindicate the primacy of culture in our cognitive and moral endeavors. Although these arguments are couched within detailed historical studies, they gain their force and continuing relevance not because they confront us with a problematic feature of a particular period of European intellectual history, but rather because they seek to make us recognize something about ourselves here and now. As Gadamer argues, we need to overcome the "fundamental prejudice of enlightenment," its "prejudice against prejudice."[34] This requires that we come to terms with the fact that "long before we understand ourselves through the process of self-examination, we understand ourselves in a self-evident way in the family, society and state in which we live."[35] Though characteristic of a broad band of twentieth-century projects concerned with the reorientation of critical reflection, the arguments describing the standoff between enlightenment and culture have their roots in the debate about the nature of enlightenment conducted during the eighteenth century. We have already encountered Reinhold's and Mendelssohn's attempt to differentiate between culture and enlightenment while at the same time inscribing both in a broader context of human cultivation and development. Others, such as Herder or Hamann, emphasized their irreconcilability. Drawing partly on Rousseau's argument in the first *Discourse*, Herder criticizes the emptiness of "freethinking," which, cut loose of any substantive commitments, becomes a mere "mechanical" game[36] that oppresses and holds captive our souls "under chains of flowers."[37] Almost a decade later, in his *Metacritique of the Purism of Reason*,[38]

Hamann singles out Kant as the chief proponent of this arid rationalism. He criticizes the "partly misunderstood and partly failed" project of the purification of reason, on the grounds that the attempt to make "reason independent of all tradition and custom and belief in them" is as vain as it is dogmatic.[39] There is a lot that separates the various positions sketched here. However, what the arguments for cultural embeddedness of both the eighteenth- and the twentieth-century critics share in common is a fundamentally ethical concern about the kind of impoverished and self-engrossed life we are invited to lead when asked to adopt *sapere aude* as our motto. It is this concern that I want to address in this section.

Our investigation into the connection between the injunction "Have the courage to use your own understanding!" and the freedom to argue in public has disclosed the outlines of a domain of human interaction that takes us beyond the bare articulation of the demand to think for oneself. Nonetheless, it is this demand that guides Kant's account. Set beside those of Mendelssohn or of Reinhold, in which enlightenment is defined, and defended, in terms of the concrete gains in knowledge, skill, virtue, or happiness that are claimed to accrue from it, Kant's account seems unduly austere. As Foucault points out, it is "almost entirely negative." I want to argue, however, that this conception of enlightenment does not commit us to the kind of perfectionist search for rational self-purification that Hamann criticizes. Rather, it opens up a domain of practice that describes a constructive relation with culture. This Kantian alternative is not a project of reconciliation, in the manner of Reinhold or of Mendelssohn. Rather, by enabling us to consider the *social* character of the project of intellectual self-determination, it allows us to resist, rather than overcome, the either/or of culture and enlightenment.

Looking closely at the "Enlightenment" essay, we can without much difficulty discern the signs of its own cultural embeddedness. From the example of the publicly speaking priest, a likely reference to Johann Friedrich Zöllner, a clergyman and member of the Wednesday Society who first posed in print the question, what is enlightenment? to the very idea of public use of reason, which reflects the structures of communication and debate established in the various enlightened societies, Kant can be seen to weave freely into his argument historically specific cultural references. Considered from the perspective of rationalist purism, these references should spoil the argument. However, this perspective is not the only one open to us. Kant's practical conception of enlightenment, in which participation in public argument is vital, enables us to view the references to his own culture as contributing to

an outline of a *possible* culture that fulfils the demands of enlightenment. In this way, we can think of this latter as not antithetical to culture but, on the contrary, as enabling us to envisage the realization of a culture *of* enlightenment.

A culture of enlightenment is simply a culture in which people are free to make public use of their reason. Although Kant himself does not employ this term, it serves to make vivid certain important features of his position. First, it makes explicit Kant's concern with defining a domain of practical human interaction that is not reducible either to the political domain or to that of personal morality. Secondly, it underlines the extent to which substantive commitments are contained in the very idea of a public use of reason. These substantive commitments are quite simply the material conditions that must obtain in order for public enlightenment to be possible. The formal requirements of inclusion and of publicity can be seen thus to correspond to certain concrete requirements, namely the freedoms which people *must* enjoy in order to be able to make public use of their reason. The requirement of inclusion corresponds to the freedom of participation in public argument, which concerns the identity of the public. The requirement of publicity corresponds to the freedom of communication without fear of persecution, which Kant often calls the "freedom of the pen." These freedoms are but specifications of the freedom to make public use of one's reason, answering respectively the questions of who participates in public argument and what is the content and thematic range of these arguments. At the same time, they represent commitments by those who participate in this culture of enlightenment to ensure that argument remains truly open to the public at large and that the participants do not suffer sanctions as a result of their communications.

Despite its importance, the question of who participates in public argument is not addressed by Kant outside the "Enlightenment" essay, and even there it is treated only cursorily. However, in order to envisage the outlines of a culture of enlightenment we need to examine what level of participation we can plausibly attach to Kant's proposal. For this, we can turn first to the examples he uses in his essay of priests, soldiers, and overtaxed citizens. What is immediately striking is the seeming inconsistency between the universal horizon stipulated by the requirement of inclusion and the identity of the public that pursues its own enlightenment. Those who express their thoughts in public are invited to speak as men of "learning" or as "learned" individuals who address the "reading" public. These qualifications appear to restrict the public use of reason to a small circle of educated individuals and thus to revise downward, so to speak, the real reach of the

domain of application of the requirement of inclusion. Hannah Arendt infers from this that the specification "learned" imposes a restriction on the public use of reason. "The scholar," she argues, "is not the same as a citizen; he is a member of a very different kind of community, namely, 'a society of world citizens,' and it is in this capacity that he addresses the public."[40] While the general gist of the argument fits with the account of inclusion given so far, I think that the idealized scholar in Arendt's account does not answer the "who?" question that concerns us here. Kant's references to learning can in fact be interpreted as meaning that no *other* qualifications are necessary for participating in a public argument. The emphasis on education can thus be understood as emancipatory, as lifting the barriers that could be imposed by someone's rank or occupation—as Kant puts it elsewhere: "the mark of *learnedness* signifies an inner determination of a man, but *being a master or a servant* only an external relation" (IX:61, *Logic* 566). This interpretation fits better with the principle of inclusion that defines a public use of reason as one that anyone may make. We can then argue that the freedom of participation represents a commitment to overcoming the traditional barriers of birth, wealth, standing, or professional specialization (Kant is especially insistent on the latter because he is concerned to open up religious debate to those who are not members of the clergy, namely the philosophers).

One question remains, however, concerning the sex of the participants to public debate. The exclusion of women would mean that the very group singled out at the beginning of the "Enlightenment" essay for being entirely in the thrall of the guardians,[41] and hence presumably most in need of emancipation, would be the one deprived of the means of escaping their self-incurred immaturity. Do then women form part of the "real public" or is the real public merely an extended and more open version of the various enlightened societies, with which Kant was familiar and which were made up of learned professional men? Kant's generally unflattering views on women have often been attacked and also dismissed as unsound on the grounds that, as Susan Mendus argues, Kant tends to elevate "to the level of undeniable and indubitable truth" what are clearly "principles and practices of eighteenth-century Germany."[42] Our concern here, however, is to an extent the reverse: we are not concerned with the particulars that are made into universal truths, but rather with whether we can draw a convincing cultural schema for the universalist commitments underpinning Kant's conception of enlightenment. This is why the question of women is important and relevant, because their explicit exclusion would constitute a serious fault in the very *exposition* of the idea of the freedom of participation.

To decide this issue it is useful to look briefly at Kant's argument on citizenship. Kant argues that women should be denied citizenship on the grounds that they are not *active* members of the commonwealth. To be an active member, one must enjoy a degree of economic and social independence. As Kant explains, only a member of the commonwealth who is "his own master" and able to support himself may be granted citizenship and allowed voting rights (VIII:295, *TP* 77). Apart from minors, those who are considered as nonactive are women, servants, and a number of people whose occupation is precarious and who are "under the direction or protection of other individuals" (VI:315, *MM* 126). Kant's denial of a political voice to these people, together with his use of the empirical criterion of economic independence to determine who is fit to vote, is one of the most controversial features of his political philosophy.[43] Here, however, an asymmetry emerges between the entitlement to participate in the political domain, which is strictly curtailed, and the freedom to speak in public. The latter, it emerges, is truly unrestricted. As Kant states explicitly, any member of the "*complete* commonwealth" (VIII:37, *WE* 56, emphasis added) who wishes to make use of his, and here we can add also her, reason may do so. That Kant does not use here the active/passive distinction, and refers instead to the complete commonwealth allows us to interpret the freedom of participation in the broadest way possible, taking into account all those who fall under the description of *naturaliter maiorennes*. Thus while minors remain excluded, the domain of public reasoning remains open to otherwise disenfranchised members of the commonwealth, including women. The nonrestrictive conception of commonwealth used in this context drives a wedge between the condition of economic and legal tutelage of the nonactive members, which remains static, and the condition of the immature, who are invited to make full use of the emancipatory possibilities that public argument opens to them.

In contrast to the freedom of participation, the freedom of communication is treated in several places in Kant's work, most often in a political context. As we have seen in the previous chapter, even under the rule of an enlightened king, the public contestation of political claims was actively discouraged and was considered to be dangerous.[44] Kant's defense of the "freedom of the pen" in political matters constitutes thus a principled response to a particular historical set of circumstances. Since the use of one's own understanding cannot, without contradiction, be subject specific, public reasoning must extend to politics even if, or, especially if, this happens to be a sensitive domain. There is, however, more to Kant's concern with securing the freedom of political communications. Public argument is entrusted with discrete

political functions: it provides a forum for political criticism, forming a public tribunal for the laws of the state; it substantiates the conception of rightfulness as consent, by allowing the people to be informed about what is proposed in their name; finally, it facilitates the political education of both the people and their rulers, acting, in the long run, as a peaceful force for political reform.

The most extensive discussion of these functions can be found in "Theory and Practice" where Kant declares that the freedom of the pen is the only "safeguard of the rights of the people" (VIII:304, *TP* 85). The context of this claim is an argument against Hobbes, who, according to Kant, argues that "the head of state has no contractual obligations towards the people" (VIII:303, *TP* 84). While Kant rejects the contrasting idea that the people have coercive rights against the head of state, he finds Hobbes's proposition that the head of state be granted absolute power "quite terrifying" (VIII:304, *TP* 84). It is here that political criticism becomes important; it provides a mechanism for correcting mistakes that can lead to the citizens' suffering an injustice. On those grounds, Kant argues that "the citizen must, with the approval of the ruler, be entitled to make public his opinion on whatever of the ruler's measures seem to him to constitute an injustice against the commonwealth" (VIII:304, *TP* 85). The citizens' entitlement critically to examine particular laws in public is presented here as ancillary to their entitlement to expect that the ruler acts in good faith and would not wish to do them an injustice. Nonetheless, since, as Kant points out, the ruler is, after all, "no more than a human being" (VIII:304, *TP* 85) and hence fallible, he should be given the opportunity to correct his possible mistakes. Conversely, we can read this as a plea to give the *citizens* the opportunity to submit the laws of the state to public scrutiny, or to grant them freedom of the pen. Still, I want to argue now, this is not a prudential argument.

Although the fact of human fallibility does play a role in Kant's conception of public debate, it is not the determining ground for this freedom. The freedom to communicate without fear of persecution flows from the principle of publicity and is ultimately derived from Kant's conception of rightfulness, which stipulates that "whatever a people cannot impose upon itself cannot be imposed upon it by the legislator either" (VIII:304, *TP* 85). This principle also accounts for the second function of political public argument. If the idea of the consent of the people is not to remain an abstract requirement on the legislator, it must have implications for the conduct of everyday political life. Essential to this is the need to ensure that the citizens are informed about matters that concern them and their rights, for otherwise they

cannot be thought of as freely giving or withholding their consent. Free political argument informs the citizens of the intentions of the legislator, but also the legislator of the opinions of the citizens. This model of rather optimistic reciprocity is further in evidence in the educative function that Kant ascribes to public argument in the political sphere. He argues that the freedom of communication allows the people, and their rulers, to become accustomed to the "spirit of freedom" that is a necessary complement of "mechanism of the constitution of the state" (VIII:305, *TP* 85). This spirit of freedom expresses a social ideal that "in all matters concerning universal human duties" each individual be convinced by reason rather than by force (VIII:305, *TP* 85). The notion of a training in freedom, which contributes to the formation of a judging public *and* of a tolerant government, fits well with Kant's gradualist conception of political change and highlights an often neglected aspect of his political thought, namely, that political freedom is not only a matter of legislation, of constitutional mechanics, but also a matter of enlightened social practice, a culture of free debate.

The persistent political references in Kant's analysis of the freedom of communication serve to underline the inevitable political dimension of the very aspiration to think for oneself. However, politics does not describe the full extension of the sphere of public argument. The freedom of communication covers a very broad thematic range including religious, philosophical, and aesthetic issues and indeed the wider domain of the arts and sciences (VIII:41, *WE* 59). In the "Enlightenment" essay, for instance, Kant focuses almost entirely on matters of religion arguing that this is necessary partly because these should not be of concern to the rulers, and partly "because religious immaturity is the most pernicious and dishonourable of all" (VIII:41, *WE* 59). Although Kant again here appears to be making a prudential argument, it is not the pernicious effects of immaturity that sustain his plea for freedom, but rather the thought that no prior checks on what may or may not be discussed are legitimate. This is because the whole point of public debate is precisely to establish criteria of rational acceptability through the subjection of particular arguments, laws, and so forth, to critical scrutiny. Accordingly, Kant presents the positive effects of such practices in terms of the cultivation of one's critical abilities. In a brief discussion in the *Critique of Pure Reason* about the suitability of certain philosophical material for educative purposes, he defends a version of the freedom of communication in terms of the training in freedom it affords the students. He argues that there are no pedagogically justifiable benefits in sheltering the young from "premature knowledge" of dangerous writings "until

their faculty of judgement is mature" and that keeping youthful reason "under tutelage" is most unwise in the long run, for it weakens the pupil's judgment (*CPR* A753/B781).[45]

We are now in position to identify different layers in Kant's interpretation of enlightenment. The first consists in an austere definition of enlightenment in terms of a particular use of one's reason. In examining the principles that determine this use, however, we are forced to consider the material conditions of enlightenment, or the sort of substantive commitments we undertake when we seek to abandon our self-incurred immaturity. These concerns, in turn, enable us to form an idea of a "culture of enlightenment." A culture of enlightenment describes a sphere of social interaction that is not hierarchically structured in the manner of guardianship, but inclusive and egalitarian because what vouchsafes this sphere are the freedoms of participation and of communication. We can see these freedoms as representing the cultural schemata of the principles of inclusion and of publicity. A further layer becomes accessible once we attempt to envisage what it would be like *truly* to recognize that *sapere aude* concerns each and all; that is, to recognize the concrete entailments of the reflexive structure of the universalist demands of intellectual independence. In this context, the idea of a culture of enlightenment functions as a social ideal against which current practice is measured. It is significant in that respect that Kant's examples of public reasoning are examples of *critical* reasoning, of people criticizing the tax system, public laws, and religious doctrine. This is not only because the treatment of dissenters is the touchstone of the degree of toleration of a particular social arrangement, but also because it is *through* disagreement or difference of opinion that we encounter the others' efforts to use their own understanding.

A potentially damaging challenge to this outline of a culture of enlightenment comes from a late work, the "Contest of Faculties," in which Kant introduces a conception of popular enlightenment that contradicts in important ways the model of public argument presented in the "Enlightenment" essay. The salient difference is that popular enlightenment no longer involves the wider public directly at all. Those who need enlightenment and are presented as the beneficiaries of "public instruction" are now said to be the rulers, who are addressed "in respectful tones" and "implored to take the rightful needs of the people to heart" (VII:89, *CF* 186). Further, in a move that is highly reminiscent of Reinhold's proposals, Kant assigns the role of "public instructor of right" to the philosophers, "the free teachers of right" (VII:89, *CF* 186). The difference is that in Kant's account the philosophers do not teach the unenlightened people but the unenlightened

rulers: their task is to mediate between the public and the government, informing the latter of the rights of the people. In this context, we cannot speak either of freedom of participation nor of freedom of communication, unless, that is, we understand them very narrowly as the freedom the philosophers must enjoy, in order to pursue their task of instruction without censure, without being "decried as a menace to the state" (VII:89, *CF* 186). This narrowing down of the scope of public argument, which is now effectively reclaimed by the specialists, is puzzling. One way of solving this puzzle is by interpreting Kant's argument here not as proposing an alternative to the conception of enlightenment we have been examining so far, but rather as focusing merely on a subsection of public communications, namely those involving philosophers and the government. What supports this interpretation is the context and topic of the "Contest of Faculties." The context is provided by Kant's long struggle with the state censor who, implementing the more conservative regime of the successor of Frederick II, Frederick William II, sought to prohibit the publication of *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*. Kant recounts the whole episode in the preface of the "Contest of Faculties," explaining that after the king's death, he judged himself to be no longer bound by his promise to withhold the publication of the book. This posthumous communication with Frederick William II, through which Kant seeks to absolve himself of the accusation that writing on religious matters constitutes a "misuse" of his philosophy, fits particularly well the content of essay. In the "Contest of Faculties," Kant undertakes to define the role and boundaries of philosophy and of the other academic disciplines, and the relation of each to the political authorities.[46] Given this context, therefore, it is not surprising that Kant concentrates on *philosophical* freedom and emphasizes the public role of the philosophers and their freedom to "instruct" the rulers. Far from replacing the freedoms of participation and of communication, philosophical freedom should be seen rather to relate to them as a part to a whole.

4. Communication, Autonomy, and the Maxims of Common Understanding

An interesting dynamic emerges from our foregoing analysis of the public use of reason and of the cultural ideal it describes. Enlightenment demands and depends on the effort of the individual; the call to intellectual emancipation is directly addressed to one and each. This is reinforced by the idea, contained in the publicity requirement, that each is entitled to judge for himself. What Kant enjoins us to do is

to make use of this title. But when we come to the question of how we are to do this, it becomes clear that the judgment of the individual has an inclusive dimension that exceeds the individual, indeed, as the universalizability test stipulates, the search for reasons within oneself has a universal horizon. On Kant's account, when I properly use my own understanding, the reasons I choose to adopt are those that I can judge to be universally valid. Although the two principles, publicity and inclusion, play different and complementary roles, they both articulate a self/others relation that Kant clearly considers to be vital for intellectual emancipation. It is important therefore to examine in greater detail this relation and its significance for the interpretation of enlightenment we have pursued so far. First, however, I want to begin by looking at two problems that arise with respect to the freedoms of participation and of communication. This will help render more vivid what is distinctive about Kant's proposal.

The first problem is that the domain of application of these freedoms appears to be too narrow. In contemporary discussions about free speech this is often understood to mean free speech *and* expression. This expansion of the notion of "speech" to include nonlinguistic expression is considered desirable because it makes possible to address within the ambit of a debate about free speech a wide range of issues, including pornography and artistic practice.[47] In sharp contrast to this now fairly widespread usage, the freedoms of participation and of communication concern exclusively spoken and written argument. This is because they represent the substantive commitments of the freedom to make public use of one's *reason* in "all matters" (VIII:37, *WE* 55). However, the restriction of the domain of freedom to material with propositional content is not merely an incomplete articulation of contemporary ideas about free speech and expression. It is, I want to argue, a different kind of idea that gives us access to a rich, but also demanding, conception of rational freedom as rational autonomy.

The second problem with the freedoms of participation and of communication is their vulnerability in the absence of any legal protection. Whereas today an equal right to free speech is presented routinely as a right that is (or ought to be) enshrined in law, the freedoms discussed here are not formalized claims that can be redeemed legally. This is because the freedom to make public use of reason, from which these other freedoms issue, is itself placed beyond the formal boundaries of political decision and sanction.[48] We can thus only speak of a *culture* of enlightenment, or, following Kant, of a "*spirit* of freedom," that is, of the practices of the members of the complete commonwealth. This creates the following anomaly: public reasoning, which is a key

ingredient of the republican polity and of enlightened politics in general, does not fall within the scope of publicly enforceable laws. This is because, in contrast to contemporary arguments in which free speech is viewed as a basic political right, Kant's defense of the freedom to debate in public does not have a political derivation, nor is it directly connected to his concept of political right.[49] Rather, the way Kant seeks to establish the legitimacy of practices such as free communication relies ultimately to a particular conception of *reason*.

On Kant's account, public reasoning articulates a demand for intellectual freedom: "use your own understanding." However, it has become clear from the way in which this demand is articulated, through the principles of inclusion and of publicity, that at issue is not just the freedom to think what one wills. The freedom Kant recommends is a principled freedom and the grounds for recommending this principled stance is a connection, as yet unclear, between such freedom and reason. A distinctive feature of this rational freedom is that it requires the participation of others. Better to grasp, therefore, what is at stake in Kant's conception of rational freedom, we must further determine the precise role and extent of this participation. I propose to do this by looking at three maxims Kant sets out with small variations in the *Critique of Judgement*, the *Anthropology*, and the *Logic*. These are: "(1) to think for oneself; (2) to think oneself in the position of someone else; and (3) always to think in agreement with oneself" (IX:57, *Logic* 563). Sometimes Kant describes these maxims collectively as rules that lead to the attainment of wisdom (VII:200, *Anthropology* 72), sometimes as "rules and conditions" for "avoiding error" (IX: 57, *Logic* 563), and sometimes as maxims of sound common understanding that can help elucidate the very principles of critique (V:294, *CJ* 160). In her analysis of these maxims, Felicitas Munzel argues that only the first concerns the freedom of thought, while the second instructs us how to exercise our judgment well.[50] Although Kant's reference to wisdom renders this prudential reading prima faciae plausible, I will argue that it should be rejected because it distracts from the unity of the three maxims and, most importantly, from the nature of the freedom Kant seeks to defend. For a full account of this freedom, we need to consider the three maxims conjointly. On the interpretation I pursue here, each maxim is seen as articulating a distinct element of the process of reasoning freely, central to which is communication with others. In emphasizing the role of communication, I further depart from the traditional view that takes its cue from Kant's account of *sensus communis* in aesthetic judgment in which communication in principle is all that is required.[51] Rudolf Makkreel interprets the second

maxim precisely in this way, arguing that "comparison with what is possible rather than actual" is required.[52] While this distinction is tenable and arguably necessary within Kant's account of aesthetic judgment, it leads to a misinterpretation of his account of the judgments of ordinary human understanding in which the freedom to communicate with others is fundamental.

The first maxim, "to think for oneself" (*selbstdenken*), can be seen to correspond to the motto "Have the courage to use your own understanding!" Like this latter, it has a negative meaning, namely, that one should not accept unquestioningly the authority of the guardians. Contradicting this minimalist interpretation of the first maxim is Kant's equation of the adoption of this merely negative principle in the *Critique of Judgement* with liberation from superstition. To think for oneself, he argues is the maxim of an "unprejudiced" way of thinking. He explains this as follows:

> The first is the maxim of a reason that is never *passive*. A propensity to a passive reason, and hence to a heteronomy of reason, is called *prejudice*; and the greatest prejudice of all is *superstition*.... Liberation from superstition is called *enlightenment*. (V:294, *CJ* 161)

The connection drawn here between enlightenment and liberation from superstition clearly clashes with the foregoing reconstruction of Kant's conception of enlightenment, as fundamentally a *test* of what is to count as superstition or prejudice. If we look more closely, however, at the context of these problematic claims, we find that Kant does not view superstition as a veil of error, which enlightenment miraculously lifts. Rather he describes superstition as a particularly debilitating *habit* of thinking: "the blindness that superstition creates in a person, which indeed it even seems to demand as an obligation, reveals especially well the person's need to be guided by others, and hence his state of passive reason" (V:294, *CJ* 161). The point then is that the superstitious keep their reason in a condition (*Zustand*) of passivity, or of *heteronomy*.

This view of superstition, as essentially a kind of immaturity, tallies with the discussion of prejudice we find in the *Logic*. Drawing from the same legal tradition from which Gadamer draws in his argument for the rehabilitation of "prejudice" (*Vorurteil*), Kant distinguishes between "provisional judgments" (*vorläufige Urteile*) and prejudices (*Vorurteile*). As regards the former, he argues as follows:

> Provisional judgements are very necessary, indeed indispensable to the use of the understanding in all meditation and investigation. For they serve to guide the understanding in its searches and to that end they place

> at its disposal various means. . . . Provisional judgements may therefore be regarded as maxims for the investigation of a matter. One could call them also anticipations, because one anticipates the judgement on a matter before one has the determinate judgement. (IX: 75, *Logic* 578)

Clearly, therefore, provisional judgments play a vital role in thinking and should not be confused with prejudice proper. "Prejudices," Kant argues, "are provisional judgments that are *adopted as principles*" and, consequently, must be viewed as principles of erroneous judgments (IX: 75, *Logic* 578). Where does the error lie? Kant seems unconcerned with the content of prejudices, which could be true or false: "occasionally," he admits, "prejudices are true provisional judgements" (IX: 75, *Logic* 578). The problem is rather with what we might call a category mistake, the mistake of treating a preliminary judgment as definitive *without* having undertaken the intervening steps of examination and reflection. Kant describes this as a sort of "delusion," when we take our "subjective grounds as objective out of want of reflection, which must precede all judging" (IX: 76, *Logic* 579). The elision of the moment of critical reflection transforms the preliminary judgment into prejudice and results in a "passive" or "mechanical" use of reason (IX: 76, *Logic* 579). We can conclude, therefore, that the maxim of *selbstdenken* is indeed, as Kant claims in the *Anthropology*, a "*negative* principle" (VII:229, *Anthropology* 97). It counters the mechanical, or heteronomous, use of reason without issuing any directive for its correct use. It is thus a condition for "enlightened" or "unprejudiced" thinking (IX: 57, *Logic* 564, V:294, *CJ* 160). It does not specify in what rational freedom consists. To discover the precise structure of rational freedom, that is, what is to count as an *autonomous* use of reason, we need to turn to the second maxim: "Think from the standpoint of everyone else" (V:294, *CJ* 160).[53]

Kant describes this maxim as a maxim of communication, and also of "enlarged" or "liberal" thinking (VII:200, *Anthropology* 72).[54] He then explains that what distinguishes the liberal or broadminded thinker is not the possession of extensive knowledge, but rather the capacity to "override the private subjective conditions of his judgement, into which so many others are locked, as it were, and [to] reflect on his own judgement from a universal standpoint (which he can determine only by transferring himself to the standpoint of others)" (V:295, *CJ* 161). From this, we can easily see that the second maxim expresses precisely the idea we found contained in the universalizability test. What is more clearly indicated now, especially in the *Anthropology* version of this maxim in which Kant adds "in communication with others" (*in der*

Mitteilung mit Menschen) (VII:200, *Anthropology* 72), is that reflection upon one's judgment from a universal standpoint has an irreducible communicative aspect. Communication allows us to discover what *might* count as universalizable. Publicity, taken now as the practice of "making public," acquires thus a criterial function for universalizability.

To find out how it fulfils this function we must start by examining the connection between the two maxims. The two maxims are not merely adventitiously connected, but rather make up a two-step process of rational autonomy. A clue for their relation is contained in the discussion of prejudice in the *Logic*. Alongside the more familiar types of prejudice, Kant places those that he describes prejudices of "self-love" or "logical egoism" (IX: 80, *Logic* 582). We may ask though, in what does egoism resemble the imitative and passive reasoning, which Kant associates with prejudice in general? In what sense is the egoist *hetero*nomous? It seems counterintuitive to put together those who show a propensity to follow the opinion of others and those who refuse to consult it altogether. For all we know, the egoist may yet be expressing her innermost convictions and original thoughts. Again, however, what matters is not the origin or source of the ideas one calls one's own, but, as with the issue of guardianship, one's capacity to appraise them critically. Self-love hinders the exercise of this capacity and therefore, contrary to appearances, it encourages *passivity* in the use of one's reason. In the *Anthropology*, Kant gives a fuller account as to how this happens:

> The logical egoist considers it unnecessary to test his judgement by the understanding of others, as if he had no need of this touchstone (*criterium veritatis externum*). It is, however, so certain that we cannot dispense with this means of ensuring the truth of our judgement, that this is perhaps the most important reason why learned people clamour so insistently for the freedom of the pen. For if we were denied this freedom, we would be deprived of a great means of testing the correctness of our judgements, and would surrender ourselves to error. (VII:128–29, *Anthropology* 10)

The mistake of the logical egoists is that they consider themselves cognitively self-sufficient. This, Kant suggests, is a fallacious belief and also a counterproductive one because it encourages those who hold it to relinquish the opportunity to ascertain the truth of their judgments. The thought expressed in this passage is not dissimilar to the idea we found expressed in the "Orientation" essay, namely, that we should endeavor to think "in community with others," which is, as we saw, at the heart of the proposal regarding the public use of reason. The difference here is that Kant seeks to emphasize the deeply problematic

nature of the egoistic perspective. What is less clear in this new formulation is how one can avoid becoming an egoist while remaining an *independent* thinker, how, in other words, the demand to think for oneself is balanced by the demand to heed the judgment of others. We need then to find out more about what this latter demand involves and how it differs from mere acceptance of the authority of others or the authority of the majority.

The key to addressing this question is communication. Kant describes communication as a *criterium veritatis externum*, or "external touchstone of truth," giving the following account of how it is supposed to work:

> An *external* mark or an *external* touchstone of truth is the comparison of our own judgements with those of others, because what is subjective will not be present in all others in the same way, so that illusion can thereby be cleared up. The *incompatibility* of the judgements of others with our own is thus an external mark of error, and to be regarded as a cue that we should examine our procedure in judgement. (IX:57, *Logic* 563, translation slightly modified)[55]

One significant feature of this account is the role it attributes to disagreement, which is what triggers the reaction of the "external touchstone." To continue with Kant's metaphor, the touchstone does not show that our metal is indeed gold, but rather puts to doubt our *own* conviction about its impeccable nature. Again this is not proof positive that our judgment is erroneous, but it should be taken as hint (or sign) that it might be so, thus affording us the opportunity to reexamine how we came to hold it. The crucial point of Kant's proposal is that each be given the chance to adopt a critical position with regard to how they arrived at their judgment—to wake up from their egoistic slumbers, so to speak. It is important to note here that Kant's exploration of the sociality of reason does not make him into a consensus theorist *avant la lettre*.[56] What he seeks to exploit is the critical potential of dissent here and now, rather than the regulative potential of future convergence of opinion. To appreciate this, we may distinguish between the content-related aspect of dissent, the fact that discussants disagree about something, and its formal aspect, its function, that is, as an error signal that alerts the discussants to a possible deficiency in their reasoning. To ignore the latter, amounts to refusing in principle to consider that one may be mistaken. This, Kant suggests, is not just an unfortunate psychological disposition, but an epistemic dead end that leads to logical egoism.[57] The alternative is not immediate capitulation but critical examination of one's procedure; we should not reject our judgment at

once; rather, we should examine how we have arrived at our judgment "for we may be right *in substance*, and wrong only *in the manner* of representing it" (IX:57, *Logic* 563, translation slightly modified). By encouraging us to adopt a critical stance toward our own judgments, communication helps trigger the process by which we examine (or indeed reexamine) our judgments. Although availing ourselves of this external touchstone of truth does not amount to the adoption of the universalist perspective spelled out in the test, communication can be thought of as an enabling condition for undertaking, or renewing, this process of structured self-questioning. This link between communication and autonomy both explains why Kant considers logical egoism as a prejudice, and accounts for the tight link between the first and second maxims: "think for yourself" and "think form the standpoint of others."

This leaves unaccounted the third and final maxim, the maxim of consistent or coherent thinking. Though certainly uncontroversial and eminently sensible, this rule appears at first to add nothing to our understanding of enlightened reasoning. Also, given the centrality of critical reflection to Kant's proposals, it seems that we should avoid interpreting consistency too strongly, that is, as an instruction not to contradict our earlier views on a matter. Revisability is built into Kant's conception of rational autonomy. Therefore, it would seem more natural to interpret consistency with respect to the *principles* we adopt in our reasoning. In the *Critique of Judgement*, indeed, Kant offers a clue for precisely this kind of interpretation. He argues that the third maxim "is the hardest to attain and can in fact be attained only after repeated compliance with a combination of the first two has become a skill" (V:295, *CJ* 161–62). This claim echoes the claim in the "Orientation" essay that enlightenment is "the maxim of thinking for oneself *at all times*" (VIII:146, *WO* 249, emphasis added).[58] The third maxim can be seen then as urging us consistently to apply to our thinking the *previous* two maxims. Interpreted in this way, consistency is put to the task of joining the negative side of rational freedom as intellectual emancipation, the throwing off the "yoke of immaturity," with its positive side as autonomy, whereby we seek to override the narrowly subjective conditions of our judgment. This is not to say that one may not be consistent in applying nonenlightened principles, but that considered in this context to be "in agreement with oneself" (IX:57, *Logic* 563) forces us to reconcile the demands of the previous two maxims: to be independent *and* to consult the opinion of others, that is, to avoid both logical egoism and the conveniences of immaturity.

The foregoing analysis of the maxims of "common human understanding" has shown that Kant envisages a tighter link than was

initially apparent between enlightenment and communication, the practice of "making public," or thinking "in community with others." This participatory conception of rational autonomy helps explain why even when Kant invokes a notion of entitlement to judge, through the principle of rightfulness, this entitlement is not taken as primitive for his defense of the freedom to make public use of reason. In contrast to contemporary liberal defenses of free speech, Kant proceeds on the basis of what he considers to be the essential requirements for rational autonomy, and not from a notion of basic individual rights. The introduction of a communicative element alongside the principles of inclusion and of publicity indicates that autonomous reasoning is not something a thinker can do on her own. This is not because of a limitation implicit in the principles of public reasoning, but rather because of a limitation suffered by the thinker. The thought underpinning this is that the ability to rehearse in my mind an alternative to my position cannot be sustained *ex se ipsum*. Unless I am allowed access to contrary opinions against which I can test my arguments, the exercise of my own critical judgment will be severely limited. Solitary reasoning can thus be seen, alongside reasoning that obeys professional or institutional guidelines, as a species of *private* reasoning. The interpretation of intellectual freedom as rational autonomy brings to light the dynamic structure of this freedom, which consists of a relation between three elements: the individual's judgment, the universal horizon of reflection about the criteria underpinning the judgment, and communicative relation between individuals. What remains unclear, however, are the grounds on which Kant recommends this use of reason. It is not enough to be told that "private," "passive," "mechanical," in short, "heteronomous" reasoning is defective, we need to find out what reasoning defect this is exactly. In the next section, I argue that it is a specific conception of reason that sustains Kant's diagnosis and further explains the precise relation he seeks to establish between reason and freedom.

5. Reason's Good Name and Reason's Public

What underpins Kant's discussion of a public use of reason is a conception of reasoning as a critical reflective process. Reflection, Kant states, "must precede *all* judging" (IX: 76, *Logic* 579, emphasis added). The touchstone metaphor, which he so frequently uses, is particularly apt in that respect because it vividly conveys the idea that reasoning is a process of assaying arguments and ideas. It is this conception of reasoning that

sustains Kant's defense of intellectual freedom, and by extension, the freedoms that vouchsafe the culture of enlightenment.

In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, after a brief account of political freedom under coercive laws, Kant describes the relation between freedom of communication and reasoning:

> To this freedom belongs also the freedom to set out for judgement in public the thoughts and doubts, which one cannot resolve alone, without being decried as troublesome and dangerous citizens for doing so. Therein lies one of the original rights of human reason, which recognizes no other judge than that universal human reason in which each and everyone has a voice. And since all improvement of which our condition (*Zustand*) is capable must come from this source, such a right is sacred and must not be curtailed. (*CPR* A752/B780, translation modified)[59]

In this passage, Kant links what he calls "the original right of human reason" with the fallibility of human reasoners. All improvement of our condition, he argues, must come from the freedom to communicate with others. This condition, in turn, is characterized by the fact that we are finite rational beings who lack the capacity for perfect rational insight. We could say therefore that free public reasoning is reasoning under conditions of finite intelligence. Yet, Kant is reluctant to grant rights of free communication to individual reasoners, referring instead to the original right of human *reason*. To clarify these claims, we can compare Kant's position with one that prima faciae appears to be a very similar one, that is, John Stuart Mill's defense of freedom of speech in *On Liberty*.

Mill argues that "law and authority have no business with restraining" the expression of opinions.[60] The only desirable constraints are those imposed by what he calls the "morality of public discussion," which consists in "giving merited honour to everyone, whatever opinion he may hold" and generally in discursive honesty in one's dealings with others.[61] Of especial interest to us here are the grounds Mill gives in his defense of the freedom of speech. He argues that the refusal to hear an opinion comes from an erroneous assumption that subjective certainty is the same as absolute certainty, and thus of a failure to take into account human fallibility.[62] He defends the free flow of all opinion, arguing that, even if "all mankind minus one" reached agreement upon an issue, the one contrary opinion should be allowed free expression. He justifies this as follows:

> Were an opinion a personal possession of no value except to the owner; if to be obstructed in the enjoyment of it were simply a private injury, it would make some difference whether the injury was inflicted only on a

> few persons or on many. But the peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion is that it is robbing the human race; posterity as well as the existing generation; those who dissent from the opinion still more than those who hold it. If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error from truth; if wrong, they lose, what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer and livelier impression of truth, produced by its collision with error.[63]

What is most striking in this passage is the claim that the holding of an opinion is not merely a private matter, but that it has a *public* dimension. It is because of this public dimension, the fact that it pertains to a public realm of reasons, that holding an opinion has also a public function. This public function, which censorship obstructs, lies in the opportunity for criticism and correction offered when a diversity of opinion is available.[64] Mill's connection of freedom of speech with the "mental well-being of mankind"[65] bears a clear similarity to Kant's claim that "all improvement of our state" has its source in the freedom of everyone to have his say. And yet, despite their similarity the two arguments differ in important and relevant ways. While Kant's argument has an undeniable, though frequently ignored, pragmatic element,[66] it is based on a *different* conception of freedom to that of Mill's.

The obvious difference is that Mill does not stipulate any constraints to public communication. The virtues of honesty and equanimity characteristic of the "morality of public discussion" are recommended on the grounds that they facilitate the unimpeded expression of opinion. For Kant, by contrast, the freedom of public reasoning is quite unlike Mill's "complete liberty" because without the requirements that structure freedom in Kant's proposal, and which represent specific commitments from the part of the thinker, there simply is no freedom. But this does not mean that unless we are impeccably autonomous, we should be denied a voice. On the contrary, Kant not only proposes a demanding conception of freedom, but also makes it a *condition* of reasoning. Mill's defense of the freedom of discussion is tied to the end that we pursue, namely truth, or, more generally, the desire to ensure the mental well-being of mankind. For Kant, by contrast, all improvement of our state *must* come from the freedom to communicate with others. This is not a teleological—or prudential—claim, but rather a juridical one: it is the assertion of the original right of human reason.

But what does this juridical claim entail? What does it mean for reason to have a right? In the passage just quoted, Kant draws together three elements: reason, freedom of communication, and the human condition. What connects these elements is the question of judgment, of who is the authoritative judge of rational claims. The "right" of reason

can then be interpreted as signifying precisely a "title" of authority. This fits with Kant's phrasing that the original right of reason "lies in" the process of publicly conducted free debate. We could say then that reason's title of authority hangs on the structured freedom of public argument. This in turn means that a commitment to reason implies an antecedent commitment to intellectual freedom. By following this line of argument we can see the deeper roots of Kant's interpretation of enlightenment as public use of reason, for the task of establishing a relation between formal features of argumentation and rational authority lies at the heart of the critical project as it is outlined in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. A critique of pure reason is to function as a "tribunal which will assure to reason its lawful claims, and dismiss all groundless pretensions" (*CPR* Axi). The purpose and scope of the tribunal is therefore restricted. Nonetheless, the famous diagnosis that metaphysics has become a "battle-field of . . . endless controversies" (*CPR* Aviii) with the result that its claims as the queen of the sciences appear tarnished is presented as a problem for *human* reason, rather than as a merely technical problem to be resolved among experts in the field. Therefore, while the tribunal is concerned with establishing the legitimate use of concepts such as causality or freedom for instance, its methods have a broader relevance for the manner of justification of rational claims. Although metaphysical disputes are a particularly urgent case, Kant is not concerned only with the claims of the queen of the sciences, but also with human reason itself and the esteem (*Ansehen*) in which rational argument is held among "common people" (*CPR* A 749/B 777). The critique of pure reason is presented as exemplary of rational dispute resolution, for it "secures to us the peace of a legal order in which our disputes have to be conducted solely by the recognised methods of legal action" (*CPR* A751/B779). While "legal" *strictu sensu* means established through the "tribunal" of pure reason, it also has a broader sense of arguing on the basis of a commonly binding framework, and this is just as relevant to debates about the nature of causality as it is to debates about the tax system. In the absence of a commonly binding framework, Kant argues, disputes between competing claims remain within a Hobbesian "state of nature" where reason "can establish and secure its claims only through war" (*CPR* A752/B780). Kant's invitation to leave the state of self-incurred immaturity can be seen now also as an invitation to abandon the state of nature. To continue with Kant's metaphor, we can say that the "state of law" is not one in which no disputes arise, but rather one in which they can be addressed through freely conducted public criticism:

> Reason must in all its undertakings subject itself to criticism; should it limit freedom of criticism by any prohibitions, it must harm itself, drawing upon itself a damaging suspicion. There is nothing so important with respect of its utility, nothing so sacred, that it may be exempted from this probing and thorough inspection, which recognizes no personal authority (*Ansehen*). The very existence of reason depends on this freedom. For reason has no dictatorial authority (*Ansehen*); its verdict is always simply the agreement of free citizens, of whom each must be permitted to express, without let or hindrance, his objections, or even his veto. (*CPR* A738-9/B766–67)

While Kant does not employ here the phrase "public use of reason," he indicates clearly that the scope of critical examination encompasses *all* our rational undertakings. The critical reflective examination of rational claims, he suggests, is the only means open to us to make good claims to rational authority. This relation between freedom and reason is not that of a means to an end but that of antecedent and consequent. Insofar as reason has a title or a claim to authority (*Ansehen*), this title or claim issues from the freedom of publicly conducted criticism. And similarly, the respect in which reason is held, or its "good name,"[67] depends on this freedom. Two points need to be investigated in this connection: the conception of reason and the conception of the individual presupposed in this relation.

Let us begin with Kant's conception of reason. From the passages quoted above, it appears that reason is not so much a faculty or a gift that human beings have naturally and unproblematically, but rather a norm whose validity is constantly probed and reviewed. Further evidence for this comes from Kant's claim that reason is an "active principle" (IX:76, *Logic* 579)[68] and that its employment should take the form of a "spontaneous action in conformity with laws" (IX:76, *Logic* 579).[69] "Active" and "spontaneous" in this context are not descriptive terms, but rather prescriptive: they tell us what reason *ought* to be like. The idea that the authority of reason depends on the freedom of communication contains an ideal of a reason that is free and authoritative by virtue of being self-critical. Given the structure of this freedom, it becomes now possible to view reason as a kind of norm that depends for its validity on the structured freedom and open scrutiny of communication. Using one of Kant's examples from the "Enlightenment" essay, we could say that enquiry into what is to count as a fair tax policy is at the same time an enquiry into what is to count as a rational argument. This is because the latter, *as well as* the former, cannot be decided by reference to mere fact—of a sensible or a supersensible nature—but rather it is something that needs to be worked out. We can

rephrase this by saying that in seeking to address questions such as what is a fair tax policy? which, beyond reference to the facts of the matter, involve, and indeed require, a reflective capacity, that is the capacity to engage with the question, what is to *count* as a fair tax policy? we need to engage in a certain type of free enquiry. Conversely, because it enables us to recognize the discursive nature of rational demands, the role of such enquiry is not limited by its function in the debate of a particular question. On the Kantian model, rationally to debate the matter at hand is also at the same time critically to reflect upon the rules that guide one's thinking on the issue. It is through such reflection that we come to determine not only what counts as fair or right but also as rational. It is because at every level these claims to fairness, rightness, rationality, and finally authority must be open to scrutiny that the commitment to employing universalizable principles in one's own thinking must be complemented by the commitment to publicity not just in principle, but also in practice.

Characteristic of the relation between reason and freedom outlined above is that the position held by the individual thinker cannot be conceptually diluted within the social structure of communication or the impersonality of the rational norm. That perfect objectivity is unobtainable for creatures like ourselves is a familiar claim. What is less obvious is how we are to view our position as a consequence of this. Although the vocabulary of an "impasse," a "conflict" from which there is "no escape,"[70] is perhaps tempting, Kant's account of reason offers us the means to resist it. This is because it invites us to rethink the very categories of subjective/objective and view what is to count as such as part of a process. Put differently, the universal reason in which "each and every one has a voice" is not a yea-saying chorus, but made up of distinct voices that can be individuated through disagreement. The individual standpoint is not inevitable, it is necessary, for it is individuals, with their local, partial perspectives, who are engaged in critical reflection about and interpretation of the rational norm. Thus they form a key part in shaping the nonlocal, nonpartial perspective of reason. It is when this dynamic between the universal horizon of reflection for the justification of rational claims and the particular context in which the demand for justification arises becomes lost that this "condition" (*Zustand*) looks like an impasse. We can illustrate this by focusing on an overlooked but telling detail of Kant's argument, namely, that public communications should be eponymous. Speaking in one's *own* name does not have only the metaphorical meaning that one thinks independently, but also that one stands by one's thoughts as a *named* individual.[71] In a letter to Schiller, Kant writes: "I feel that it

may harm your magazine [i.e., *Die Horen*] not to have the authors sign their names, to make themselves thus responsible for their considered opinions."[72] But why should signing one's name matter? After all, as Kant himself argues, the "truths of reason hold anonymously" (IX:78, *Logic* 580),[73] they do not depend on the personal authority of their author. While it is perfectly possible to judge an anonymous communication on its merits, anonymity is problematic for two reasons. First, the desire for anonymity, or for holding communications under the "seal of secrecy," as advised by Mendelssohn among others,[74] is a sure sign for lack of freedom of communication. Therefore, what might appear as a liberating device can just as plausibly be viewed as an external *constraint* imposed upon an author. The letter to Schiller suggests though yet another problem with anonymity. Signing one's name is not only an external sign of authorship, but also a sign of one's freedom as a thinker, a freedom that enables one to take responsibility for one's opinions. That one remains identifiable as the author of one's thoughts is but a necessary element in a structure of authorship that demands a constant effort to "override the private subjective conditions of his judgement" (V:295, *CJ* 161), through the process of making public, of communicating, of engaging with a real addressee.

We come thus full circle back to the freedom of communication or "freedom of the pen," which members of the complete commonwealth ought to enjoy. The cultural ideal that emerges from this is quite unlike a rationalist utopia in which all claims presented for our assent are rendered obvious and transparent by reason's equal light. The culture of enlightenment is on the whole a rather messier affair. This has often escaped contemporary interpreters, who expect Kant to be more of a rationalist than he in fact is. Thomas McCarthy for instance accuses Kant of relying "on a kind of 'pre-established harmony' among rational beings, owing to their sharing in the general structures of *Bewusstsein überhaupt*."[75] But this is a misdirected criticism based on an overemphatic reading on the conditions of aesthetic judgment. To be rational for Kant does not mean to be set on a predetermined path. The general structures of *Bewusstsein überhaupt*, which McCarthy mentions, can at best justify our expectations of agreement. They certainly do not entitle us to assume anything about a preestablished harmony of opinions. Nor is the Rousseauean model of instituted harmony any more appropriate here. The participants in public debate are not coached into sharing the same views—this is why communication is vital for Kant, but not for Rousseau. On the Kantian model, dissent is incorporated within an agonistic model of social interaction in which each individual has a stake but only as a member of the public of

reason, so that one addresses an audience of potential speakers and speaks as a potential addressee.

6. Power and Authority: Hamann on the Immature and Their Guardians

One question we have not yet addressed is Foucault's question about the immature and the conditions under which they can be said to be responsible for their immaturity. One important issue raised here is how we are to conceptualize the causality of immaturity. The way Kant does this is dictated by the need to show that the structure of autonomy he proposes, and the ideal of culture this proposal entails, is a modification of existing structures of heteronomy. The link between the two lies in what one does or fails to do. The diagnosis of immaturity follows from a conception of reason that is not an automatic reflex but rather something to be achieved. For this, it is necessary that we, the immature and the egoists, come to see the demands of reason also as *our* demands. These demands, however, the requirements of universalizability and publicity, only become an issue once "thinking for oneself" has become an issue. Put differently: the maxims of rational autonomy conceptually presuppose the enabling maxim of *selbstdenken*. But on what does *this* maxim depend? First of all, it requires courage, because it is something willed by a person who may be going against the grain of what is socially acceptable or politically enforced. But something more is at stake here, something that emerges once we compare what Kant calls "the maxim of self-preservation of reason" with the maxim of "thinking for *oneself*" (VIII:146, *WO* 249). Although, on Kant's account, the latter requires a commitment to the former, the two maxims are clearly different. The self-preservation of reason requires that we do what is required to establish and preserve the authority of reason. Failure to follow this maxim amounts to forfeiting reason's authority. By contrast, thinking for oneself requires that we view ourselves and our capacities in a certain way. Failure to follow this maxim is failure of a different sort. For what is being forfeited is what Kant terms our calling or "vocation" (*Beruf*) to think for ourselves (VIII:36, *WE* 55). It is attending to this call that he describes in the *Anthropology* as our "exit from self-incurred immaturity" and as "the most important revolution [that can occur] within us" (VII:229, *Anthropology* 97). This inner revolution consists in abandoning a conception of ourselves as bound to obey the authority of the "guardians," and considering ourselves instead as able to assess *for* ourselves whether their claims are authoritative or not. The change from submission to

external authority to submission to the authority of one's own reason is a condition for undertaking what is required to make good this claim to authority, namely, the commitment to autonomous reasoning. This is not a change of mind about something but a change of view of oneself (a "revolution" in fact): it amounts to viewing ourselves *as* the public of reason and reason's demands as *our* demands. In short, the individual thinker is singled out twice over in the process of enlightenment: first as the addressee of the call "think for yourself" and second as the addressee of the fully articulated demands of autonomous reason.

What remains controversial about this account is the centrality Kant accords to choice. Is it simply a matter of choice to view ourselves as able to exercise our own judgment? If it is not, as Kant appears to concede when he pleads that we be let free to take our first steps to enlightenment, then the diagnosis of individual responsibility is one-sided and possibly misleading. Reinhold's description of the extremely restricted opportunities of the majority of the people to educate themselves seems to lend support to this view. If enlightenment has a public, cooperative, participatory dimension, it would make sense to ask whether immaturity too goes also beyond the domain of the individual. This is a point forcefully made by Hamann in a letter written to Krauss immediately after the publication of Kant's "Enlightenment" essay.

Hamann was highly critical of Kant's account of enlightenment and was one of the first to take Kant to task on his use of the adjective "self-incurred" [*selbstverschuldet*] to characterize immaturity. He writes:

> I am pleased to see enlightenment, if not explained, then at least complemented and expanded, as more aesthetic than dialectic, through the comparison of immaturity and guardianship. Now for me, the *proton pseudos* (a very important word which hardly allows itself to be translated without awkwardness into our German mother tongue) lies in the accursed *adiecto* or adjective of self-incurred. Incapacity is not really a guilt [*Schuld*] . . . it only becomes a matter of guilt through the will, and the lack thereof, to resoluteness and courage—or as a consequence of fabricated notions of guilt.[76]

On Hamann's account the *proton pseudos* (which is generally used to mean the first or foundational philosophical lie) on which Kant constructs his account is the diagnosis of immaturity. What Hamann finds objectionable is the apportioning of blame to the immature. He points out that incapacity is not by itself blameworthy. This certainly tallies with Kant's account, in which immaturity is *not* presented as an incapacity, but rather as a form of inaction. Yet this is where the *proton pseudos* lies, according to Hamann. He claims that the immature are

"falsely accused" and that the adjective, "self-incurred," depends on notions of "fabricated guilt." There is an "other," Hamann maintains, "who must *implicite* be understood as the *correlatum* of the immature," an "odious guardian" who "must take all responsibility and guilt."[77] The immature he implies cannot be accused either of laziness or of cowardice for their condition is not self-incurred. The conditions under which they are asked to employ their understanding are conditions of severely curtailed freedoms under the absolute guardianship of Frederick II. Though Hamann does not identify Frederick II by name, he clearly indicates that it is he who is the true *correlatum* of the immature. By conveniently "forgetting" Frederick II, Kant offers a skewed diagnosis, which renders his remedy, namely the public use of reason, unconvincing. The truth of Kant's argument, Hamann claims, is summed up in the Frederickian motto "argue but obey."

The fundamental issue, which Hamann raises in this letter, concerns the relation between authority and power in Kant's essay. We can begin by looking first at Frederick's motto "argue but obey." While it is true that Kant praises this motto, it is wrong, I think, to take this as evidence for enthusiastic and obsequious support for a strong ruler as Hamann claims when he criticizes Kant for being a mere "mouthpiece" for Frederick II.[78] The historical context of the essay should give us some pause for thought. By 1784, Frederick's power had already began to wane and as a result, the religious freedoms he had granted were progressively rescinded. Religious intolerance, which Kant describes in his essay as the most pernicious form of all, was on the rise. It is conceivable, therefore, that in his endorsement of Frederick's motto, Kant was seeking to expresses his support for a very limited freedom that was *already* under threat. Still the question remains of how the freedom to make public use of one's reason fits with "argue but obey." Though Kant claims that "*Caesar no est supra Grammaticos*" (VIII:40, *WE* 58), the apparent praise for "*Argue* as much as you like and about whatever you like, *but obey*" (VIII:37, *WE* 55) introduces an ambiguity about the authority that has a legitimate claim to our obedience. This conceptual issue cannot be settled by appeal to historical or pragmatic considerations. Where Hamann's criticisms strike home, in other words, is in his claim that, despite his appeal to the authority of reason, Kant still leaves intact the authority of one guardian, the guardian par excellence, Frederick II. The authority of the king is not supported by reason, Hamann points out, but rather by a "large and well-disciplined army."[79] He then concludes that it is this external power that keeps the immature in their place, and not their laziness or intellectual cowardice. Hamann is surely right to ask to what extent this power itself can be

the object of critical debate. If the external authority of the king is considered as independently binding, then, despite Kant's claim that the public use of one's reason should be free in "*all* matters," the authority of the king would still be placed outside the legitimate boundaries of critical argument. Those who seek to make public use of their reason would appear to face two competing claims to authority: one issuing from the king, the other from reason.

It should be clear from our analysis so far that on Kant's account reason must, as a matter of *self-preservation*, refuse to accept the legitimacy of any constraints that are not reason's own. The problem arises once we consider the relation between the authority of reason and political authority. From the perspective of the former, the king's voice can only count as one among many. Matters look different, however, if we take into account the king's role as a head of state, and the powers that are at his disposal that enable him to maintain this role, enforce his will, and indeed curtail the citizens' freedom to argue. While in theory there ought not to be a disjunction between legitimate political authority, based on rational principles, and the authority of reason, the very ambiguity of "argue but obey" suggests that there is a disjunction. Who has then a legitimate claim to our obedience, reason or the king? Kant maintains that in every commonwealth "there must be obedience to generally valid coercive laws [*Zwangsgesetzen (die aufs Ganze gehen*)]" (VIII:305, *TP* 85). The formulation "generally valid" can be interpreted to mean "in agreement with the principle of legitimacy," namely, that "whatever a people cannot impose upon itself cannot be imposed upon it by the legislator either." However, Kant's use of the expression *aufs Ganze* suggests rather that he means simply laws that apply to the general population (*das Ganze*). Hence, we are told nothing here of the legitimacy or rightfulness of the laws we are entreated to obey. Obedience is tied to de facto valid laws, and thus to the will of the monarch who issues them. Still it is in this context that Kant insists that laws must be publicly discussed.[80] Although he does not recognize a right of disobedience based on obedience to the authority of reason, he argues that "there must be a *spirit of freedom*... for each individual requires to be convinced by reason that the coercion that prevails is lawful (*rechtmäßig*)" (VIII:305, *TP* 85). While the "generally valid" is bound up with the will of the king, that which is *legitimate* (*rechtmäßig*) is established through free argument. To make sense of this, I think we need to go further than merely rehearsing the familiar arguments about Kant's political conservatism.[81] On the one hand, we have invested political authority issuing laws that are generally valid; that is, laws that we find ourselves constrained to obey whether we are given a

chance to debate them or not (and hence we cannot establish whether they will turn out to have a legitimate claim over us or not). On the other hand, we have the authority of reason. Reason does not issue laws in the same way, not only do we have to come to see out of our free accord what is rational as authoritative, but also for the claims of reason to have authority these must depend on the structured freedom and open scrutiny of communication. There is, in short, an asymmetry between the two kinds of authority. Kant seeks to negotiate this asymmetry, the fact that reason does not issue direct instructions in the manner of a despot or a dictator, by presenting existing political arrangements as the *context* for the demanding task of achieving rational autonomy. Thus he argues that if a citizen were deprived of the opportunity freely to judge the laws of the state, the citizen would be "in contradiction with himself" (VIII:305, *TP* 85). What he fails to see is that while this contradiction may be unbearable for the citizen, it is quite bearable for rulers who are uncomfortable with the demands of autonomous reason.

An alternative and more convincing way of negotiating the asymmetry between political and rational authority is by seeking to secure legal or institutional protection for the freedom to make public use of one's reason. But this is not a path Kant takes. Instead, he envisages public debate as an entirely self-regulating practice through which speaker and addressee reciprocally define each other as constituting the "public of reason," that is, as members of a public which shows in practice that it recognizes the authority of reason. As a result of the absence of any institutional embodiment and protection of the sphere of public reasoning, the practices of communication and debate that make up the culture of enlightenment remain highly vulnerable. The very existence of a free public sphere of debate depends on the continuing good will of individual participants and, ultimately, on the continuing good will of the ruler, since the freedom to speak in public is itself subject to a free grant. Here we might consider that Kant phrased his own request to Frederick II that he tolerate free speech and learn to think freely alongside his subjects as an *appeal* rather than as a demand, treating him, just like the rest of his readers, as an addressee of a public argument. If the ruler, however, fails to be persuaded by Kant's assurance that the freedom to speak in public is "the most innocuous freedom of all" (8:36, *WE* 55), he may refuse to allow it, or, were he to allow it, a less amenable successor, as Kant was to discover through his own problems with the censor, can easily revoke it.

While the relation between reason and freedom that underpins Kant's proposals can help explain his reluctance to allow for legal pro-

tection for the public use of reason, it cannot fully account for it. There is indeed nothing in the notion of a law or of an institution as such that would immediately condemn those who appeal or make use of it to the kind of "private" reasoning Kant associates with representing the viewpoint of particular organizations. In principle, there should be no contradiction in seeking to set out a law or define an institution that has a protective or enabling function, by upholding the freedoms upon which the public use of reason depends. Here we should also consider institutions that enable a public to be educated and properly informed, as well as those public fora in which soldiers, priests, and ordinary citizens voice their thoughts. Such institutions do not fulfil a merely instrumental role, that is, they do not serve only as means for the circulation of ideas; they also serve to foster public argument and thus help to realize the culture of enlightenment. That Kant does not describe any such institutions can perhaps be explained by the strongly paternalistic and hierarchical institutions with which he was acquainted. However, this omission also serves to underline two key aspects of public reasoning, which retain their relevance for us today. First, it makes abundantly clear that because the authority of reason depends on freedom, it is inherently vulnerable to the threats posed both to and by this freedom. Consequently, no amount of legislative or institutional protection can provide an impregnable shield for the culture of enlightenment. Enlightenment is only the product of the consistent and vigilant efforts of all who heed its call. Secondly, Kant's omission shows the importance of preserving the *individual*'s freedom to contribute to public discussion without the weight of institutional authority, that is, to contribute simply *as* an individual—as a member of the public of reason. For only such freedom can secure the possibility that institutions themselves are subject to scrutiny and prevented from monopolizing and covertly regulating the voice of criticism.

What the foregoing analysis has shown is that the task of thinking for oneself is without doubt a demanding one. The question we have to ask next is whether it is *too* demanding. Kant's assurances to the contrary, the freedom to make public use of one's reason is not as straightforward as it appears at first—we have certainly seen that is also not so "innocuous" either. Can we view then the realization of our calling to freedom as a practicable project? As we have seen, enlightenment depends vitally on the participation of the public at large. It is, therefore, eminently practical, it describes a model of social interaction, a set of practices, a *culture*, and, at the same time, it is agonistic and highly vulnerable. The question therefore arises with some urgency whether this is a historically viable project. Kant clearly

thinks so, but to examine his reasons for giving an affirmative answer to this question, it is necessary to discover a compatible interpretation of his complex account of historical progress. For this, however, we need to look beyond his discussion of enlightenment to his treatment of history and of the problem of the possibility of future progress, which is the topic of the next chapter.

Chapter 3

Culture as a Historical Project

1. Kant's Attempt at a Philosophical History

The ideal of rational autonomy spelled out in Kant's argument concerning a public use of reason opens up a unique perspective on existing social practices of communication and participation in public argument, for these are both presupposed and viewed as in the process of developing. When Kant states that we do not "at present live in an *enlightened* age" but "we do live in an age of *enlightenment*" (VIII:40, *WHE* 58), he is pointing precisely at this relation between what is and what ought to be. Put differently, the culture of enlightenment that shelters each of our attempts to think with others is also a *goal* furthered by each of those attempts and toward the attainment of which we aspire. Hamann's sharp reminder of the precariousness of such efforts, however, raises the question of whether this is a realizable goal. In other words, can the culture of enlightenment serve as a social ideal against which current practice is to be measured? Or is it only a "dream of reason"? We touch here upon the deeper issue raised by Hamann's criticisms, namely, that the demands of reason may be such that they *must* remain unrealizable, unsullied by the facts of political power and the demands of everyday social interaction. This version of the purism of reason charge constitutes a challenge not only to our rational projects in the social sphere, but also in the political and moral spheres. Kant's writings on history amply confirm the centrality he accords to these questions, especially concerning moral progress and the long-term realization of political imperatives.[1] As we shall see, his approach to these issues is not uniform. What is consistent throughout

is the attempt to formulate a progressive account of history that is compatible with his critical philosophical commitments—in short, to formulate a *critical* conception of history.

But can there be a critical conception of history that is anything but agnostic? Any other account—progressive *or* regressive—would appear to lay claim to knowledge we lack. Indeed, consistently with the position he develops in the first *Critique*, Kant explicitly denies that we can have any knowledge of the future direction of history. However, in a series of essays published between 1784 and 1798, he repeatedly presents and seeks to defend a progressive view of history. These seemingly contradictory claims appear side by side in the "Contest of Faculties." Here Kant unambiguously rejects all available models of thinking about history. He argues that those who claim that human affairs are subject to ebb and flow over time—a position he calls "abderitism"—as well as those who subscribe to progressive or regressive views of history (respectively "eudaimonistic" and "terroristic" in Kant's terminology) lay claim to knowledge that human beings cannot possess (VII:81, *CF* 179). Unlike the natural sciences, which deal with natural phenomena, history is the study of human actions, that is, events that depend on human volition and which, therefore, cannot be predicted: "For we are dealing with freely acting beings to whom one can dictate in advance what they *ought* to do, but of whom one cannot *predict* what they actually *will* do" (VII:83, *CF* 180). Yet, despite his criticism of attempts to gage the future course of history, Kant does not dismiss the question of historical progress. In fact, he undertakes to answer it in the affirmative: "the proposition that the human race has always been progressively improving and will continue to develop in the same way is not just a well-meant saying to be recommended for practical purposes. Whatever unbelievers may say, it is tenable within the most strictly theoretical context" (VII: 88, *CF* 185). An important clue to the "most strictly theoretical context" (*die strengste Theorie*) mentioned here is to be found in an earlier passage in which Kant ridicules the prophetic claims of rival theories of history and compares the observation of human affairs to the observation of planetary motions:

> Perhaps the course of human affairs appears so senseless to us, because we have chosen the wrong standpoint from which to look at it. Seen from the earth, the planets sometimes move backward, sometimes stand still, or move forward. From the standpoint of the sun, however, which only reason can assume, the planets move continually according to the Copernican hypothesis in an orderly course. (VII:83, *CF* 180, translation altered)

Just as there is a wrong perspective in astronomy (i.e., the Tyhonic perspective) that leads to absurdity, so there is a wrong perspective in the philosophical study of history. In the latter case, the mistake consists in trying to occupy the "perspective of providence" (VII:83, *CF* 180), which is unattainable for us. The terms of this argument are highly reminiscent of the way Kant sets out the "Copernican hypothesis" in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, by proposing that we take into account the subjective contribution to our knowledge of external objects. The references to Copernicus and to Tyho Brahe in "Contest of Faculties" allow us to consider a similar change in perspective. We are invited to abandon our attempt to occupy an external, godlike perspective on history—what Kant calls the "absolute point of view" and which is quite simply unavailable to us—and to adopt instead a subject-oriented perspective. Although it is not yet clear what such a change in perspective might involve, we are given a clue about what it is in the "End of All Things," where Kant describes the human perspective as that of "an intellectual inhabitant of a sensible world" (VIII:335, *ET* 79). To be an intellectual inhabitant of the sensible world means not only to be someone who has both rational interests and natural inclinations, but also someone who *inhabits* this world rather than seeking to take a speculative flight beyond it. The advantage of making this Copernican revolution in the study of history, it seems then, is that it permits us to entertain a progressive view of history without straying beyond the boundaries of the knowable.

Before we turn to examine how Kant carries out this project and how successful it is, it is important to clarify first why he considers it necessary to offer a progressive account of history. What he seeks to establish is to what extent and under what conditions we frail, recalcitrant, selfish agents can regard history as the domain in which we are able to realize our rational aspirations and to bring to fruition our rational practical commitments: to live under just laws, to enjoy the freedom to make public use of our reason, to live peacefully, to be moral. The importance of this human, rational interest in history emerges with particular force in Kant's argument against Mendelssohn in "Theory and Practice." Mendelssohn's view of history is typical of what Kant would term "abderitism." Mendelssohn developed his position in debate with Lessing who, in *The Education of Mankind*, presents history as the gradual development of humanity from childhood to fulfilled adulthood.[2] Mendelssohn takes a different view, arguing that we can only speak of progress in respect to individual human beings and not humanity "as a whole"; when we look at the past, we see that at different places and historical periods, the "child, the adult

and the old man" coexist.[3] He concludes that it is therefore more reasonable to view history as a fluctuation between high and low points without any necessary progress between them. Kant takes a diametrically opposed view, arguing that, as a species, humanity is constantly progressing not only in cultural but also in moral matters, so that "the end of *man*" shall be "brought by providence to successful issue, even though the ends of *men* as individuals run in diametrically opposite direction" (VIII: 312, *TP* 91). The grounds of this disagreement are highly instructive concerning Kant's views. What he objects to is the idea that the human race is engaged in a Sisyphean struggle, "advancing over a period of time towards virtue, and then quickly relapsing the whole way back into vice and misery" (VIII:308, *TP* 88). Kant terms such a situation a "farce" and maintains that confronted with such a prospect the "most ordinary, though right-thinking man" can only despair. What influences the activities of right-thinking men, he argues, is precisely the "hope for better times to come, without which an earnest desire to do something useful for the common good would never have inspired the human heart" (VIII:309, *TP* 89). It appears then that the motivation for a progressive account of history is a concern with the effect that a negative construal of human history exercises on our own *present* goals and ambitions.

Kant is, of course, aware that one cannot simply write history as one would wish it to happen. As he himself admits, it is "a strange and at first sight absurd proposition to write a history according to an idea of how world events must develop if they are to conform to certain rational ends" (VIII:29, *IUH* 51). This, nevertheless, is what he sets out to do. He maintains that alongside empirical history—which is the study of historical events considered as causally ordered, just like any series of happenings in time—there is a place for philosophical or "universal" history, which follows an "*a priori* rule (*Leitfad*)" supplied by a "philosophical mind" (VIII:30, *IUH* 53). As a genre, "philosophical history" owes its emergence to the wider growth of interest in history during the eighteenth century in different fields of research, including political, legal, and economic studies, biblical scholarship, and classical philology. The project, however, is fraught with problems, which stem precisely from the ambition to discover the meaning and direction of history.[4] Philosophical history, or, as it has more recently been termed, "speculative" or "substantive" history,[5] has come under sustained attack in the twentieth century. Suspected for their antiliberal implications, historical "grand narratives" have been repeatedly criticized for being politically and epistemically disreputable exercises in metaphysical speculation.[6] From our present stand-

point, therefore, it would seem that the cost of accommodating the commitments and hopes of Kant's "most ordinary right-thinking man" is simply too high.

But then Kant himself, as we have seen, is highly critical of historical speculation, which he describes as the product of "an imagination inspired by metaphysics" (VIII:55, *RH* 211). This remark comes from one of his reviews of Herder's *Ideas on the Philosophy of History of Mankind*, which appeared in a series of volumes from 1784 to 1791 and can help to throw some light on how Kant thought philosophical history *should* be written. What he finds most objectionable in Herder's work is his appeal to an invisible realm in order to explain observable facts about human history. In the *Ideas*, Herder seeks to combine two contrasting philosophical perspectives that stem from two different schools of thought. The first adopts modern "Copernican" principles and recognizes the relativity of the human perspective.[7] The second presents the entire universe as interconnected in a great "chain of being." On this latter, older view, human beings occupy a privileged place within the cosmos both because of their high position in the "chain of being" and because of their proximity to the divine. Uniting the two, Herder assigns a "middle" position to human beings within the natural universe.[8] His argument is based on observations drawn from diverse fields of research, including physiology, anatomy, geography, and climatology. From these studies he concludes that the entire universe is guided by an invisible organic force (*Trieb*) that propels human beings to higher levels of achievement, pushing them to develop ethically and spiritually and to attain "knowledge of the divine."[9] Kant somewhat archly observes that "The reviewer must confess that he does not comprehend this line of reasoning" (VIII:52, *RH* 208) and describes Herder's appeal to an invisible animating force as an attempt to explain the obscure by the more obscure. He insists that if we want to form an adequate conception of human history, we should turn neither to metaphysics nor look to "a museum of natural history" (VIII:56, *RH* 212). Rather, we must direct our attention to human actions, for these alone reveal the human character. Kant's emphasis on human action and his hostility to speculation about supraindividual forces, such as Herder's conception of *Trieb*, suggests that the supporting framework for his account of humankind's expectations of future achievement will be provided by an account of how human beings are revealed through their actions. The purpose of this is not merely to make philosophical history more plausible, but to show that human beings are not condemned to having an idea of what is right, while being fundamentally intractable and incapable of measuring up to it. It is in response to the

challenge represented by this "counsel of desperation" (VIII:306, *TP* 86) that Kant formulates his philosophical history.

2. The "Plan of Nature": History from a Political Perspective

Providing a cohesive account of the historical dimension of Kant's thought is no straightforward task. This is because historically invariant principles of morality and justice have to be integrated within a narrative of historical development in a way that accounts both for the realization of the imperatives of pure practical reason and for the diversity of historical experience. Kant attempts to resolve this difficulty by postulating the existence of a "plan of nature." As we shall see, however, this "solution" is highly contested.

The concept of a plan of nature is first used in "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose," but remains central to Kant's treatment of history and appears again in "Theory and Practice," "Perpetual Peace," "Conjectures on the Beginning of Human History," and the "Contest of Faculties." In "Idea for a Universal History," Kant introduces the idea of this plan:

> Individual men and even entire nations little imagine that, while they are pursuing their own ends, each in his own way and often in opposition to others, they are unwittingly guided in their advance along a course intended by nature (*Naturabsicht*). They are promoting an end which, if they knew what it was, would scarcely arouse their interest. (VIII:17, *IUH* 41)

Kant anthropomorphizes nature, attributing to it an overriding purpose or intention (*Absicht*). Nature's "purpose," he then explains, is to develop humankind's innate capacities, including the capacity to reason, and in this way to enable them to reach a state of justice. The means nature employs to realize this higher purpose are social antagonism and strife. This suits our constitution, he claims, because our natural talents or "predispositions" (*Naturanlagen*) do not develop spontaneously but only in response to encountered obstacles and resistance. For this reason, he suggests, nature has contrived impulses such as "enviously competitive vanity" and "insatiable desires" (VIII:21, *IUH* 45) for possession and power, which cause friction among individuals, but which, at the same time, awaken and develop their latent talents. In pursuing their own aims, individuals thus also unwittingly promote nature's higher aim, which is, eventually, to bring about a just civil society and eventually a "perfect civil union of mankind" (VIII:29,

IUH 51). Kant's thesis, then, is that the ultimate end of nature is also, or coincides with, a rational end: the attainment of universal justice. It is this exploitation of humankind's disruptive and destructive tendencies for a rational end that Kant calls the "plan of nature."

We may distinguish two functions that such a plan fulfils. It provides an *explanation* for past human behavior, but it also provides *hope* for the future. In its retrospective employment, it allows human acts to be seen both as expressions of the intentions of the individuals who perform them and as parts of an overall design. Kant does not seek merely to establish narrative coherence among actions that appear to be "confused and fortuitous" (VIII:17, *IUH* 41). Rather, he seeks to show that actions which display "folly," "childish vanity . . . malice and destructiveness" (VIII:18, *IUH* 42) can be incorporated into a *progressive* narrative. In its prospective employment, the concept of a natural plan suggests that human beings—despite their apparent recalcitrance, and indeed because of it—manage to advance when considered as a species. They thus are able to fulfil the "end for which they were created, their rational nature" (VIII:21, *IUH* 45). The teleological implications of this narrative of human development allow Kant to argue that hope regarding further progress in human affairs on a world scale is possible.

It is clear that Kant's treatment of history in terms of a plan of nature is problematic. His account is exposed to the same difficulty that he recognized in Herder's philosophy of history: how can a plan that is hidden be known? Kant initially supposes that the plan of nature may be discovered in the same way as certain lawlike regularities are uncovered through studying demographic records of marriages, births, and deaths. But this is unconvincing because the identification of statistical regularities cannot help to establish the existence of an underlying design in history. It is precisely this that has led some commentators to view the idea of a natural plan as an unreconstructed remnant of rationalist metaphysics. Yirmiyahu Yovel, for example, claims that the plan of nature has a "dogmatic sound" and that Kant's historical works "appear to transgress the boundaries of critical reason and commit a 'dogmatic' fallacy."[10] The reason for this, Yovel argues, is that Kant posits a certain form of rationality that is "the fruit of a blind contrivance of nature [and] has, as such, no truly rational support." This "stepbrother of rationality must also be considered an illegitimate child of *nature*; for its springing off the natural course as such cannot be accounted for in terms of the critical system."[11] For Yovel, the problem is that Kant is able to justify his claims about progress in history only by appealing to a putative natural teleology, and this involves unwarranted speculation about nature's intentions. In short, nature is not presented as a causal

system—which, as Kant had argued in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, is the only context in which knowledge claims are legitimately redeemable—but rather as an *intentional* system that underpins history and thus allows us to explain particular cases by giving meaning to the totality of cases. A dismissal of Kant's use of natural teleology as dogmatic and therefore "inexplicable"[12] cannot be regarded as satisfactory, however, because the works in which this concept is employed coincide with the composition and publication of the major systematic works in which Kant set out the key tenets of his critical philosophy.[13]

In order to overcome this difficulty, some authors, such as Rudolf Makkreel, have sought to interpret the concept of natural teleology "reflectively," that is, by reconstructing Kant's claims in light of arguments he develops in the *Critique of Judgement*.[14] This interpretation requires invoking the apparatus of Kant's theory of reflective judgment in order to provide a "critical framework"[15] for the thesis of historical progress. What, at least initially, makes this approach appealing is that, on Kant's account reflective judgment is precisely the kind of judgment we use when judging under conditions of partial ignorance—either when we cannot appeal to an appropriate concept, as in the case of judgments about beauty, or when we lack the appropriate intuition, as in the case of nature's overall design. The problem facing this interpretation, however, is that while Kant continued to appeal to a providential concept of nature in works which postdate the *Critique of Judgement*, he himself never argued that this idea should be understood in terms of his theory of reflective judgment. Moreover, he conspicuously avoids all references to reflective teleological judgment in his writings on history. A further difficulty is with identifying the relevant type of reflective judgment. As we shall see in the next section, in the *Critique of Judgement* Kant employs reflective judgement to enable us to view human beings qua morally capable beings as nature's ultimate end. In other words, there is nothing here about the general course of human history, let alone about ends such as a "cosmopolitan constitution" or the "perfect civil union of mankind" (VIII:311, *TP* 90, and VIII:29, *IUH* 51).

These challenges have prompted others to look for a naturalistic explanation of Kant's conception of historical progress. In an important discussion, Allen Wood has argued that "Kant's philosophy of history is 'naturalistic' in that he treats history as a branch of *biology*" guided by a "philosophical idea that understands historical change as the development of natural predispositions of the human race as a living species."[16] While it is true that Kant's argument about the development of human talents is clad in a pre-Darwinian language of

organic development, it is difficult to see how biology, no matter how broadly construed, can offer the key to Kant's treatment of history. It quickly leads us to the un-Kantian conclusion that the progressive "history of freedom" (VIII:115, *CB* 226) that Kant sets out to reconstruct is "nature again," that is, naturally determined. To do justice to Kant's argument, we need to take into account his insistence that nature facilitates the political and moral progress of the species without, however, turning this progress into a natural fact.

I believe that it is possible to interpret Kant's argument concerning the plan of nature in a way that makes use of the naturalistic elements in his account without however collapsing history into nature. As we have already seen, Kant himself admits that trying to gage the course of history is a peculiar form of enquiry, constructed under conditions of empirical and metaphysical ignorance. We cannot know the future, nor can we have insight into the deeper rationality of the workings of nature. In order to resolve the problem of ignorance, Kant employs an anthropomorphic conception of nature: he presents it as an entity with an overriding purpose and a plan to realize this purpose. I want to suggest, however, that this should be seen as an "architectonic" device whose role is to enable us to consider history as a unifiable phenomenon. The actual content of this unifying concept is fairly modest, consisting of general human characteristics that are revealed through social interaction in the course of human history. Kant does not invite us to speculate about the course of history on the basis of his analysis of these characteristics, but rather asks us to engage in sustained reflection about what we may *hope* given what we know about ourselves as historical agents. Insofar as Kant presumes to tell us nothing about hidden forces that shape human history, I argue that the plan of nature is not in contradiction with Kant's larger critical project. Moreover, as we shall see, his appeal to nature is not monolithic. As a result, his argument concerning political, cultural, and moral progress is modulated to allow for the different demands that these different rational projects place on us. In order to assess the prospects of long-term realization of a culture of enlightenment, it is therefore essential that we establish the precise historical dimension of these different projects by identifying the different registers of Kant's references to nature.

In its first appearance, the plan of nature is put to a primarily political use. Kant proposes that "the history of the human race as a whole be regarded as the fulfilment of a hidden plan of nature to realize an internally—and, for this purpose also, externally—perfect political constitution as the only condition under which human beings can fully develop all their capacities" (VIII:27, *IUH* 50). Kant's aim is to show

that political justice is not an empty ideal and that it is achievable "here on earth" (VIII:30, *IUH* 53). The question of whether justice is an historically attainable goal for human beings emerges with particular urgency for Kant because he is committed to a purely a priori conception of the principle of justice. While he is aware of the practical difficulties of such a project, he believes that he can give a positive answer to this question on the basis of some general features of human behavior, which he presents in the thesis of "unsociable sociability." It this thesis that carries the burden of proof for Kant's claims regarding progress. In other words, the content of the claims regarding a plan of nature—or, as he puts it in "Perpetual Peace," a "mechanism" (VIII:366, *PP* 113) of nature—can be fully captured by the thesis of unsociable sociability. I will be arguing that this thesis does not require any untenable metaphysical commitments. It can be understood as articulating a claim about human social behavior, rather than as a claim concerning a secret force acting behind our backs.

The problem that concerns Kant here is how differently motivated individuals pursuing a plurality of ends can coexist within a state that preserves their freedom. Such a state would be one that neither abolishes nor is threatened by the freedom of its citizens. In the "End of All Things," Kant describes this as a *liberal* arrangement that is "equidistant from both servitude and anarchy" (VIII:338, *ET* 83). The question now is whether such an arrangement is attainable. The key to Kant's answer lies in the way he sets the problem:

> The greatest problem for the human species, the solution of which nature compels him to seek, is that of attaining a *civil society* which can administer justice universally. (VIII:22, *IUH* 45)

Kant had already argued in the *Critique of Pure Reason* that a just civil society is one that allows "the greatest possible human freedom in accordance with laws by which the freedom of each is made to be consistent with that of all others" (*CPR* A 316/B 373). One consequence of posing the problem of justice from the perspective of a plurality of coexisting agents each of whom have an *equal* claim to freedom is that limits must be set on the exercise of each agent's freedom. These limits, Kant maintains, flow from the concept of right itself, which, in turn, is derived from the concept of freedom. He makes this more explicit in "Theory and Practice," where he redefines justice in terms of the reciprocal rights of coercion that "each holds against everyone else" (VIII: 291, *TP* 74).[17] The idea that a civil constitution is "a relationship among free men who are subject to *coercive* laws" (VIII:289, *TP* 73, emphasis added) is crucial to Kant's treatment of the "greatest prob-

lem" for the human species. This problem, as we can now see, is none other than that of the external unification of a plurality of variously determined wills so that the freedom of each can coexist with the freedom of everyone else. Motivational variety entails that individuals cannot be assumed spontaneously to adopt maxims of cooperation; as Kant observes, human beings are not "rational cosmopolitans" acting in concert (VIII:17, *IUH* 41). His solution is to make a virtue of this difficulty with the thesis of "unsociable sociability."

The "unsocial sociability of men," Kant explains, is "their tendency to come together in society, coupled . . . with a continual resistance which constantly threatens to break this society up" (VIII:21, *IUH* 44). He does not, however, present unsociable sociability as a general observation about human social behavior. Rather, he suggests that it is an indication of nature's wisdom. He claims that nature has implanted in us two contrary tendencies: the "inclination to live in society" (VIII:20, *IUH* 44) and the equally strong "unsocial characteristic" of wanting to act only in accordance with our own ideas—the tendency "to live as an individual"—which makes us seek isolation. These two contrasting desires manifest themselves respectively in cooperative and antagonistic behavior. Kant develops this thesis through a series of "propositions" and concludes that the combination of these two desires gradually leads to the development of forms of association in which the freedom of all is respected. But how does Kant's appeal to nature help him to make this last step? One interpretation, which has many supporters,[18] takes its cue from the claim in the "First Proposition" that "All natural capacities (*Naturanlagen*) in a creature are destined sooner or later to be developed completely and in accordance to their end" (VIII:18, *IUH* 42). The peculiarity of human natural capacities is that they develop in adversity. Therefore, nature plants the seeds of strife and antagonism to help develop our talents, among which Kant includes reason. The development of our reason will enable us to realize, at some future stage in our history, that living under fair laws that protect the freedom of all is a desirable aim. On this account, Kant is thought to appeal to a putative natural teleology in order to provide support for a hope-oriented teleology of history. The advantage of this interpretation is that it naturalizes Kant's anthropomorphic claims concerning nature's intentions. It does so, however, at the cost of attributing to him an out-dated "pre-Darwinist view of the structure of development and of the nature of predispositions."[19]

While there is textual evidence that Kant held such a view,[20] we should ask whether a thesis about the development of human talents can plausibly justify his claims about progress. I do not believe it can.

Those who favor this interpretation cite in support Kant's argument of the intelligent devils from "Perpetual Peace." There, Kant argues that "as hard as it may sound, the problem of setting up a state is soluble even for a nation of devils (so long as they possess understanding)" (VIII:366, *PP* 112). This argument is taken to mean that self-seeking motives together with understanding is all that is required to establish a just civil constitution. This is not what Kant claims however. If this were the argument it would fail for the simple reason that even those who come to recognize the desirability of a just constitution may yet be too recalcitrant to adopt it. We may know what is the best thing to do, but still decline to act in pursuit of this goal. What Kant's argument with the intelligent devils in fact establishes is, first, that a good constitution is not contingent upon moral improvement, and, second, that even devils can form a *state*: even a race of utterly selfish beings propelled by self-seeking motives alone find themselves constrained to "submit to coercive laws" (VIII:366, *PP* 113). As we shall see, however, this is nothing but a reiteration, in more dramatic terms, of the thesis of unsociable sociability.

The unsociable sociability thesis describes a dynamic model of social organization that Kant uses to establish two claims: first that individuals find themselves compelled to subject themselves to coercive rules, and, secondly, that the rules of social organization are amenable to revision. It is on the basis of these claims that he then believes himself entitled to conclude that justice is an attainable goal. We can reconstruct the argument as follows. Unlike other animals, human beings order and, to a high degree, create their material and social environment; this is the claim of the "Third Proposition," that "man produce[s] everything out of himself" (VIII:19, *IUH* 43). In working to produce everything, from the necessary to the agreeable, human beings develop capacities that would not have appeared outside the social context in which they are put to use. As Kant argues in the "Fourth Proposition," what makes us feel human is precisely our *social* existence: "Man has an inclination to *live in society*, since he feels in this state more like a man" (VIII:20, *IUH* 44). However, because the ends pursued by different individuals are not always mutually compatible, participation in society does not result in perfect cooperation. Rather, from the perspective of each of us as individuals, other human beings are experienced as actual or potential hindrances to our own plans. Yet, instead of self-destructing under the pressure of competing wills, organized societies are able to withstand and contain the pressures of the antagonistic relations among individuals. This is because while "otherwise so enamoured with unrestrained freedom," we find our-

selves forced to remain in society "by sheer necessity" (VIII:22, *IUH* 46). This "necessity" (*Not*), which forces us to abandon our beloved freedom, is none other but that imposed by our desire to pursue our own ends. Not only do we require assistance in carrying out our projects, we pursue ends that *already* possess a more or less explicit social dimension; we desire social status, "honour, power or property" (VIII:22, *IUH* 45).[21] Therefore, the pursuit of our own ends, which places us in antagonistic and competitive relations to each other, is what binds us together.

How can now the thesis of unsociable sociability help with the problem of "attaining a civil society which can administer justice universally"? So far, Kant has presented a thesis about human nature as it manifests itself in society. As he argues in *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, contra Rousseau, "human nature can better be known in the civilised state" (VI:29, *Religion* 28). Kant's view of socialized individuals and human societies can be summed up as follows: compelled to be social, individuals find themselves forced to submit to the coercive rules of organized society. However, since individuals ceaselessly reconfigure their interests, societies are dynamic organizations, the rules of which are amenable to revision. This is a very modest thesis. Nonetheless it suffices for Kant's purpose, which is to argue for the attainability of a political arrangement that allows the greatest freedom for all without postulating a nation of cooperative angels, nor one of unsociable devils, who would need radically to change if they are to form a state. We can appreciate better the strength of this argument if we compare Kant's views with those of Diderot and of Rousseau. On Diderot's account, as we have seen, the formation and continuing existence of organized society is presented as a constant battle against a disruptive and anarchic nature. Though he recognizes the coercive nature of our subjection to laws, he considers social order as a necessary but artificial imposition upon our inherently changeable nature. He cannot conceive these laws as *enabling* us to exercise our freedom within the state. In Rousseau's case the problem is different. He offers a genuinely political conception of freedom, but places exceedingly demanding constraints upon its realization. The good citizen is one whose character is radically transformed with all unsociable and self-regarding traits eradicated. On Rousseau's account, ideally, when citizens submit themselves to the laws of the state, they should not to experience these laws as coercive, but as an expression of their civic identity. Kant, by contrast, takes into account *both* our sociable and our unsociable characteristics. In doing so he sets himself a twofold challenge: first, to show that a purely rational conception of justice can have "objective, practical reality"

(VIII:306, *TP* 86), and, second, to show that a political order in which the freedom of all is preserved is a realizable ideal. To meet this dual challenge effectively, he cannot rely upon overly demanding premises. Rather, he must show that justice is a historically attainable political goal for human beings living in recognizably human societies. The thesis of unsociable sociability allows him to meet this challenge. Kant argues from modest premises toward an equally modest conclusion about the necessity of social order and the revisability of its rules. Although he indicates various factors that might entice self-regarding creatures to orient themselves toward justice, including a broader conception of their egoistic aims, he does not undertake to show that revision of the rules of association between individuals will *necessarily* be guided by ideas of justice. He seeks to establish the *attainability* of justice, not its inevitability. By showing that justice requires and relies upon coercive laws, rather than angelic individual motives, Kant believes himself entitled to claim—and the wording here is highly significant—that the ends of political practical reason "can be regarded" (VIII:27, *IUH* 50) as realizable.

3. Teleological Judgments of Nature and of Culture

The encouraging political perspective on history opened by Kant's analysis of our unsociable sociability takes us some way toward addressing the broader issue of the success of our rational projects in general. However, the precise demands of justice render difficult, if not impossible, the task of using his discussion of political progress as a template for evaluating progress in the social domain in the context of our efforts to achieve rational autonomy. An important obstacle is that, as we saw in the previous chapter, the freedoms that vouchsafe the culture of enlightenment enjoy no legal protection. Infringements of those freedoms are not punishable by law, and conversely, individuals cannot be compelled to act in ways that respect the freedoms of participation and of communication. Furthermore, although it is possible to envisage that, under conditions of unsociable sociability, certain kinds of self-interest motivated public argument may well flourish, sociable devils are highly unlikely to recognize the full entailments of the reflexive structure of the universalist underpinnings of intellectual autonomy. In part, this serves to reinforce the conclusion reached in the context of our discussion of Hamann's criticisms that, in the absence of any legal or institutional support, the culture of enlightenment remains a very fragile achievement. What can provide some hope in our efforts in this

direction, I want to argue now, is Kant's analysis of "culture" (*Kultur*) that presents a less austere prospect on the effects of social interaction that is more suited to the model of public reasoning and the needs of a culture of enlightenment.

Although Kant does intermittently refer to culture in his writings on history, the most sustained and systematic engagement with the topic occurs in the *Critique of Judgement*. Here the context is not provided by the question of history but by the discussion of teleological judgment, which has a much broader remit. Initially, Kant presents the incorporation of teleological judgment within the critical framework as a solution to a theoretical problem already recognized in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, namely, the need to assume that our knowledge of nature can form a unified system. In the introduction of the *Critique of Judgement*, Kant presents the incorporation of teleological judgment within the critical framework as a solution to a theoretical problem already recognized in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, namely, the need to assume that our knowledge of nature can form a unified system, which, he now maintains, will be satisfied if we grant subjective validity to the concept of "purposiveness" (V:180, *CJ* 19).[22] While this particular application of teleological judgment does not concern us here, the general features of this type of judgment are highly relevant to the discussion of culture that follows. Characteristic of teleological judgment is that it fulfils a subjective requirement that cannot be met: we simply cannot prove that the unity and systematicity we seek in our judgments is made possible by a really existing systematic unity in nature. To obtain such a proof would require knowledge of the supersensible realm, and Kant denies that such knowledge is available to us. That he nonetheless allows that a judgment be made under such conditions means that certain questions about ends that articulate important human concerns can be addressed without stretching the bounds of the knowable. It is in this context that the discussion of culture occurs.

Within the *Critique of Teleological Judgement*, culture represents a turning point, it mediates between our cognitive interest in nature and our practical interest in the fulfilment of our moral calling. The analysis of purposiveness that precedes the discussion of culture concerns the application of teleological judgment in the study of nature. Essentially, Kant points out the limited usefulness of causal principles in the study of natural organisms or of the relations that obtain between organisms and their environment and argues for the cautious admission within a critical framework of the Aristotelean category of final cause. "Because of the special character of our understanding," Kant argues, we must "consider certain natural products . . . as having been produced intentionally

and as purposes" (V:405, *CJ* 289). Using the concept of purposiveness, we can view the individual parts of a living entity as relating to the ends or purposes of the organism as a whole, that is, as contributing to or promoting the organism's continuing existence. The leaves and trunk of a tree, for example, can be viewed as relating purposively to the whole of the tree: "the tree . . . produces itself inasmuch as there is a mutual dependence between the preservation of one part and that of the others" (V:371, *CJ* 250). The transition to culture occurs when the question of purpose, of what something is for, is asked not about the parts of an organism but about all the creatures that make up the natural world. To this question Kant gives the following answer:

> Man is the ultimate purpose of creation here on earth, because he is the only being on earth who can form a concept of purposes and use his reason to turn an aggregate of purposively structured things into a system of purposes. (V:427, *CJ* 314)

This claim is intended to provide a bridge between questions that arise within the study of nature and more speculative questions about the meaning and ultimate purpose of creation. But is this shift of register successful, or even legitimate? We should note here that the expansion of the compass of teleological judgment is gradual. From the single organism, Kant turns to consider how different natural organisms, including human beings, relate to each other and to their environment. Once we adopt the principle "that there is an objective purposiveness in the diverse species of creatures on earth and in their extrinsic relations," we can view the entire nature as a nexus of final causes (V:427, *CJ* 314). For example, we can observe how different types of seed relate to different types of soil, how different types of plant relate to the animals that feed on them, or how predators relate to their prey. In Kant's terminology, we discover a complex teleological system of mutually interlocking final purposes (*Endzwecke*). Nothing, however, is revealed thereby about nature's *ultimate* end or purpose (*letzter Zweck*). The question of an "ultimate" end is a question about the end or purpose of the entire system of final ends just described; in Kant's terms, an ultimate end is required in order "for such a system to be possible" (V:427, *CJ* 314).

But what are Kant's reasons for claiming that the ultimate purpose of nature is man, given his admission that "that experience flatly contradicts such a maxim of reason, especially [the implication] that there is an ultimate purpose of nature" (V:427, *CJ* 314)? Three considerations are relevant here. The first concerns the subjective requirement that is addressed through this type of teleological judgment, namely,

the need to determine our place within the natural world. This is something we do not know, cannot know, and yet need to know. Kant therefore flags our interest in this question, by inviting us to think for *whom* it arises in the first place. Secondly, that experience offers us no grounds for believing that man is the ultimate purpose of nature suggests that the question regarding such an ultimate purpose is simply *not* answerable within the context of our theoretical knowledge of nature. Although only subjectively valid, teleological principles are used for cognitive purposes: we postulate purposiveness in order better to understand the workings of animate nature. The question of ultimate purpose of nature may simply exceed that frame of reference; it may be a *practical* question. This brings us to the third point, namely, that Kant does not consider man here merely as one among all the other animal species, and hence, like them, prey to nature's forces, but rather as a being who is able to use nature to realize his own ends. It is at this juncture that Kant introduces the concept of culture. He makes the bold claim that the ultimate purpose of nature is "culture" (*Kultur*), that is, "the production in a rational being of an aptitude for any purposes whatever" (V:431, *CJ* 319). Methodologically, this can be understood to mean that we cannot discover the answer to the question of ultimate purpose, which is literally a metaphysical question, but rather we have to *provide* it ourselves.[23] The shift that Kant proposes here is a shift from our natural identity, as beings with certain natural capacities, to our self-created identity, which takes into account what we do with what we are given. Indeed, our position as ultimate end of creation is *conditional* upon this latter:

> If we regard nature as a teleological system, then it is man's vocation [*Bestimmung*] to be the ultimate purpose of nature, but always subject to one condition: he must have the understanding and the will to give both nature and himself reference to a purpose that can be independent of nature, self-sufficient, and a final purpose. (V:431, *CJ* 318)

That the discussion of the ultimate purpose of nature opens up a new domain of investigation concerning a "final" purpose, the purpose of human endeavor, makes explicit the evaluative dimension of Kant's teleological judgment of nature. What he seeks to establish is what is a worthy end for human beings, or what purpose man "*ought* to further through his connection to nature" (V:429, *CJ* 317, translation modified, emphasis added).

Kant gives us a choice of two possible ends: happiness and culture. We can view these as representing two perspectives on ourselves: one external and one internal. From the external standpoint we present

the now familiar spectacle of restlessness, destructiveness, and inability fully to satisfy our desires. There is no detectable natural end or purpose to our strivings. Threatened by nature's "destructive workings" and by our own destructiveness—"man himself does all he can to work for the destruction of his own species" (V:430, *CJ* 318)—not only happiness, but survival itself seems precarious. Kant proposes therefore that we focus instead on our purpose-giving aptitude itself, which he names "culture." Although it is counterintuitive to describe culture as pertaining to an internal standpoint, it fits Kant's usage here, because it is not the sum of our achievements that concern him, but rather the development of our capacity to use nature in the pursuit of our own ends. As Stuart Hamphsire puts it: "Culture, *Kultur*, is neither freedom nor happiness, but something intermediate: it has neither the supersensible, unconditioned value of freedom as an end, nor is it as empty and trivial as happiness conceived as an end."[24] Kant identifies two ways in which this capacity develops, the first he calls the "culture of skill" and the second the "culture of discipline." The culture of skill (*Geschicklichkeit*) concerns the cultivation of our problem-solving abilities in general and the culture of discipline (*Zucht* or *Disziplin*) concerns the cultivation of our capacity for choice, allowing us to become more discriminating and to have a wider choice of ends.

But what purpose is served by the development of skill and of discipline? In other words, how do we judge *culture* teleologically? The only purpose mentioned in the context of the culture of skill is one that nature has with respect to all natural organisms, namely, the maximal development of their predispositions. The discussion of the culture of skill is in fact a repetition of the familiar argument that hardship, what he calls the "shining misery" of inequality and oppression, promotes the development of human predispositions and facilitates the attainment of the ideal conditions for their deployment, which are provided by the "lawful authority" of a civil constitution (V:432, *CJ* 320). In the discussion of the culture of discipline, by contrast, Kant introduces the idea that social interaction can enable us to exercise some *control* over our unsociable characteristics—our "absurd" and troublesome predispositions (V:430, *CJ* 318). He argues that "the fine arts and the sciences, which involve a universally communicable pleasure as well as elegance and refinement" are an essential part of our social being and help "make great headway against the tyranny of man's propensity to the senses, and so prepare him for a sovereignty in which reason alone is to dominate" (V:433, *CJ* 321). Though aware of Rousseau's argument that the refinements of the arts and sciences produce in us yet more "insatiable inclinations," Kant sustains a more positive view,

arguing that achievements in arts and sciences and the social attainments that accompany them can allay the "crudeness and vehemence" of our inclinations. This inner training of the will ensures that our ability to choose our ends is not dulled and subdued by the "despotism of natural desires," which require immediate satisfaction and thus hinder the pursuit of our other aims (V:432, *CJ* 319). The discussion of the culture of discipline brings a new element in Kant's depiction of our social life that is directly relevant to our concern with the culture of enlightenment. This new element is enjoyment (*Genuß*). Until now, we have considered sociability exclusively as a necessary bond, which selfish beings reluctantly acknowledge, submitting themselves to coercive legislation, in order to further their aims. Kant now draws our attention to the pleasurable side of sociability, which he associates with the enjoyment of the arts, the pursuit of knowledge, and generally the awakening and satisfaction of our "inclinations for enjoyment" (V:433, *CJ* 321).[25] If the pursuit of social pleasures makes self-discipline not only possible but also enjoyable, then we can have a richer account of human nature, in which sociability is not only a matter of hard necessity but also of pleasure. This account better suits the social conditions of the culture of enlightenment, for it suggests that social intercourse has a role in enabling us to overcome our self-regarding or egoistic inclinations.

As we said earlier, however, culture is not an end in itself, it serves to introduce what for Kant is the more pressing issue of the ultimate direction of our endeavors, namely, the fulfilment of our moral calling. The pleasures of social life thus introduce an ethical dimension to the quest for the final purpose of culture. This is partly because Kant regards sociability itself as a virtue and partly because he views the culture of discipline as a preparation for the recognition of the higher authority of reason.[26] It would be a mistake, however, to view culture as entirely subsumed under moral ends. A teleological account of culture that posits a steady progress toward a fixed goal, even if this goal is morality, would run counter to Kant's explicit intention to present a teleology that is compatible with human freedom. Culture enables him to do this by focusing on the subjective aspect of the development of the human aptitude for setting and pursuing ends (and that means not just the ends prescribed by practical reason). He thus addresses the broader possibilities for human cultivation and improvement, without forfeiting his conception of human beings as capable of setting freely their own ends. In fact, as Hampshire argues, "only the indeterminate end, of freedom to choose an end, can single out and constitute humanity as itself an end in relation to nature as a whole."[27] Kant's discussion

of ends in this context is recessive, rather than progressive, in the sense that it enables us to gain a better understanding of what it is that we seek from the teleological judgment of nature and of culture. It is also useful to view this discussion as "anticipatory," as Monique Castillo suggests,[28] in the sense that it focuses on the conditions for the achievement of ends, rather than the ends themselves. Culture opens the way for morality because it thematizes our identity as end-*setting* beings, which is a prerequisite for considering ourselves as morally beholden, and, conversely, shows that our status as the ultimate end of nature depends on considering ourselves as morally capable and as actively involved in determining our destiny. The teleological judgment of culture is therefore open to the extent that it enables us to view ourselves as natural beings with the capacity to emancipate ourselves from nature's hold.

4. Culture and Moral Progress: Two Perspectives on Rational Ends

Kant's oft-quoted references to the "crooked timber" of mankind notwithstanding, it is clear from the foregoing account that he does not regard human nature as an insurmountable obstacle to the realization of at least some of our rational projects. The question I want to address in this section is the extent to which Kant's appeal to nature's purposes can apply to the question of the moral progress of humanity. Since our present concern is with establishing a *historical* perspective on our moral endeavors, I shall not be dealing with the related but distinct question concerning the formation of moral character. This analysis will also help to address an issue that Henry Allison has highlighted in his study of the *Critique of Judgement*. This is the problem of "the complex moral relationship in which we stand to nature" when nature is regarded both as cooperating with our efforts to realize morally required ends and as "the source of temptations to ignore our duties."[29] As we shall see, corresponding to this double aspect of nature is a double aspect of culture as morally enabling, and morally distracting. Exploring this seeming ambiguity will enable us to appreciate the nuance in Kant's progressive account of history and to discover whether the culture of enlightenment is a historically attainable goal.

To tease out the different strands of the nature-culture relation, it will be useful to begin by considering what we learned from our foregoing analysis of culture. As we saw at the end of the section on culture in the *Critique of Judgement*, we are presented with an account of human sociability that enriches the account of human nature that emerges

from the unsociable sociability thesis. At the same time, the end of the culture section introduces the beginning of a moral teleological problematic that demands a break to be made with the natural traits upon which we have hitherto based our expectations of progress. Kant's conception of moral autonomy runs indeed counter to the idea that extramoral developments, such as, for instance, the achievement of certain types of socialization, can have a moralizing function. It has often been pointed out that "it is scarcely conceivable how his radical account of transcendental freedom can be rendered compatible with the thesis that the will is subject to temporal conditions of change and evolution."[30] One way of avoiding this problem is by opting for what we might call a "rigorist" approach, denying any moral purpose to cultural, social, and political achievements. Such an approach, however, can only be sustained if we ignore Kant's own "gradualist" arguments that stress the continuity between cultural and moral development.[31]

Kant's treatment of culture in the *Critique of Judgement* illustrates the difficulty confronting the rigorist approach. As we saw previously, culture allows us to view nature as a unified system having an ultimate purpose and, at the same time, to view ourselves as capable of becoming independent of nature. Kant gives two meanings to this independence. He describes it both as the ability to use nature and to curb our natural inclinations for the sake of the ends we wish to pursue, *and* as the ability to act from a law that is entirely independent of nature, "and yet necessary in itself" (V:435, *CJ* 323). Furthermore, he draws a clear link between these two kinds of independence when, contra Rousseau, he affirms that the fine arts and sciences "make great headway against the tyranny of man's propensity to the senses [*Sinnenhang*] . . . and so let us feel a hidden aptitude within us for higher purposes" (V:434, *CJ* 321). In short, culture has a role in enabling us to recognize our moral vocation and to pursue our "final end," a purpose that is wholly independent of nature. From this perspective, culture can indeed be viewed as a "bridge that leads from nature to freedom and rationality."[32] The question we need to examine then is whether we can make sense of Kant's persistent use of gradualist arguments without naturalizing morality. I believe that we can. Michael Despland has argued that "Kant's faith in Nature and in Culture is a faith in the possibility of a progressive humanisation of man and realization of his freedom through wise social arrangements and historic achievements."[33] Despland is, I think, right in claiming this, as long that is as we keep in mind that Kant's faith in Nature is not blind—it is a position he argues for by bringing to our attention certain general facts about human sociability—and that it entails no thesis about the

inevitability or historical necessity of the realization of freedom. The links Kant traces between nature, culture, and morality have no necessitating force; they aim to reinforce the *posse* of morality, that is, to make a plausible case for what is within the realm of *possibility*.

Kant's account of moral progress is underpinned by a belief in the civilizing and moralizing effects of social interaction. He argues that with the awakening of the desire to pursue social ends, humanity takes its "first true steps" from barbarism to culture, which he defines as the "social worthiness of man" (VIII:21, *IUH* 45). The cultivation of taste and enlightenment contribute to the development of a capacity for "moral [*sittliche*] discrimination," which finally transforms the social union into a "moral whole [*moralisches Ganze*]" (45). In contrast to Rousseau, Kant sustains a mainly positive view of social conventions, arguing that good manners, adopted for the sake of *appearing* to be good, contribute to the "external advancement of morality" (VII:244, *Anthropology* 110). He even goes so far as to suggest that our natural "disposition to conceal our real sentiments" has contributed to good ends, for it has "undoubtedly, not only civilised us, but gradually, in a certain measure, moralised us" (*CPR* A 748/B 776). His most consistent theme, however, is praise for social virtues such as "affability, sociability, courtesy, hospitality, gentleness (in disagreeing without quarrelling)" (VI: 473, *MM* 265), which are seen not only as good in themselves, but also as having a moralizing effect. This theme is given special emphasis in *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, where Kant discusses the concept of the "ethical commonwealth':

> As far as we can see . . . the sovereignty of the good principle is attainable, so far as men can work toward it, only through the establishment and spread of a society in accordance with, and for the sake of, the laws of virtue, a society whose task it is rationally to impress these laws in all their scope upon the entire human race. (VI:129, *Religion* 86)

The idea that a virtuous society can be morally enabling reinforces Kant's claims concerning the moral role of particular forms of social interaction.[34] The point of these arguments is to show that human beings can become moral under recognizable conditions of social interaction, that is, without the need for a radical intervention from the polis, as suggested by Rousseau, nor as a result of a from-above implementation of a program of moral education. Kant is not only concerned about the despotism of such a "paternal government" (VIII:290, *TP* 74), but also with its effects. The emphasis placed on sociability has as its counterpart a warning against the imposition of morality from above: "woe to the legislator who wishes to establish through force a

polity directed to ethical ends! For in so doing he would not merely achieve the very opposite of an ethical polity but also undermine his political state and make it insecure" (VI:131, *Religion* 87). Morality is neither determined from above nor socially enforced. This is why the gradualist arguments have a limited scope.

When it comes to assessing the moral achievement of the age, Kant is, in fact, a cautious judge, estimating that moral development lags behind the "cultivation of talents, art and taste" (VIII:332, *ET* 75). Elsewhere, he remarks that we are "civilised (*gesittet*)" but are not "moral (*sittlich*)," or again that we are "cultivated (*kultiviert*) to a high degree by art and science" and "civilised (*zivilisiert*) to the point of excess in all kinds of social courtesies and proprieties," but far from being "morally mature (*moralisiert*)" (V:433-34, *CJ* 321, and VIII:26, *IUH* 49). The reintroduction of these Rousseauean concerns underlines the epistemic weakness of Kant's gradualist claims, but also, as I will now argue, shows the real tensions within his account of the moral development of the species.

These tensions are most clearly in evidence in the "Conjectures on the Beginning of Human History," where Kant applies arguments used in "Idea for a Universal History" to a more specifically moral end. He invokes nature in the context of an argument about the development of "man's capacities as a moral species [*sittliche Gattung*]" (VIII:116, *CB* 227). The essay is both a reworking of the *Genesis* and a critical revision of Rousseau's account of human development from the *Second Discourse*. The premise of the essay is directly opposed to the premise with which Rousseau opens his *Second Discourse*, viz., that human nature has become so deformed that speculation is now a necessary aid to the difficult task of self-knowledge. Kant argues that our conjectures about the past need not be "mere fabrication" if they bear on the "first beginning of the history of human actions, insofar as this is produced by *nature*" (VIII:109, *CB* 221, emphasis added, translation altered). It is the focus on nature, in other words, that renders our historical conjectures permissible, by giving them some grounding in experience. As Kant explains, the beginning of history "need not be fabricated, but can be drawn from experience, for we can assume this was neither better not worse at the first beginning than what we encounter now" (221 translation altered). This appeal to the continuity of experience reflects a deeper conviction that history is legible because human nature is fundamentally unchanging. The assumption of the stability of human nature is a condition of access to the first beginning of history because human nature is not itself historical even if it is revealed to us *through* history. Kant's account of the characteristics we display in pursuit of

our various projects is intended as a generalized account of unchanging human characteristics. He does not think that at some point we might lose our desire for freedom or for human society, or that we might be born with all our talents fully developed. In the present context, however, this ahistorical assumption is put to an historical use, namely, to tell a *positive* story of the development of reason.

Kant tells the already familiar story of how natural challenges provide the occasion and the context for the development of human capabilities, but introduces a new element in emphasizing the development of reason. Reason, he claims, is not a tool for survival, or a technical capacity. Repeating the claim made in the *Groundwork* concerning the inadequacy of reason as an instrument for the satisfaction of our needs (VI:396, *GW* 62), he argues that reason can *endanger* the early man, as it awakens his curiosity, prompting him to seek out foods his instinct forbids and "to extend his knowledge of foodstuffs beyond the bounds of instinct" (VIII:111, *CJ* 223). This Kantian twist on the *Genesis* story, and also on Rousseau's account of perfectibility, brings to view a conception of reason as a capacity to estimate, to compare, and to experiment, thanks to which human beings are able to extend their horizon and go beyond "the limits within which all animals are confined" (VIII:112, *CB* 223). Kant presents this capacity as crucial to *self*-estimation, that is, to the attainment of the insight that human species is distinct from "animal society." This leads to the essentially moral awareness that "man *should* not address other human beings in the same way as other animals, but should regard them as having an equal share in the gifts of nature" (VIII:114, *CB* 225; change of emphasis). Kant thus draws a parallel between a noninstrumental conception of reason and a noninstrumental conception of our fellow humans. It is this, he argues, that leads to the final stage of the beginning of human history and man's release from "the womb of nature." Man gains a position of equality with all rational creatures on account of his claim "to be an end in himself and to be estimated as such by all others" (VIII:114, *CB* 226, translation altered). Though not yet a fully articulated system of morality, the awareness that human beings are ends in themselves is the source of the "restrictions which reason would in future impose on man's will in relation to his fellows" (VIII:114, *CB* 225-6). It thus inaugurates history.

The contrast with Rousseau's account is striking: fellow feeling is not an inborn trait, but rather the product of a developed *rational* capacity. It is this that brings about the emancipation from the "leading strings" of nature and the beginning of history:

> Man's exit from paradise . . . is nothing else but his emergence from the savagery of a merely animal creature into humanity itself, from the leading strings of nature to the guidance of reason, in one word: from the tutelage of nature into the state of freedom. (VIII:115, *CB* 226)

It is here, however, that we can see the fault lines of Kant's account of moral development. Human beings are claimed to display *both* stable natural characteristics and a developing moral sensibility which, when articulated in terms of a moral ought, enables them to view themselves as human, that is, as ends in themselves. The awareness of this moral "ought," in turn, is both the product of nature and what releases us from its hold. The problematic status of this argument is well captured in Emil Fackenheim's observation that "the conditions which make history possible are themselves quasi-historical."[35] In other words, leaving nature behind, which is a necessary condition for beginning the "history of freedom" (VIII:115, *CB* 226), is both a natural step and a historical project spanning the entirety of human history. One unwelcome, and rather unconvincing, implication of this is that at one end of the history of moral development we have (a prehistory of) less-than-human beings and at the other, the prospect of the emergence of super-rational beings. Nature is assumed to be at once stable and amenable to change, insofar as human beings become gradually better able to heed the call of reason. Kant explicitly invites us to picture history in terms of a "conflict between on the one hand, mankind's endeavor [to realize] its moral destiny [*Bestimmung*] and, on the other, its unchanging obedience to laws implanted in its nature for bringing about a savage and animal condition" (VII:117, *CB* 227, translation altered). This conflict, in turn, is both continual, insofar as our obedience to the laws implanted in our nature is unchanging, and, at the same time, amenable to resolution through "education into humanity" so that the fulfillment of our destiny "as a moral species . . . no longer conflicts with that as a natural species" (VII:116, *CB* 227).

The source of these tensions in Kant's account is that he seeks both to provide us with a safe passage from nature to freedom and to hold out an emancipatory conception of moral freedom that is only realized if nature is left behind. A stark illustration of the moral imperative of emancipation from nature can be found already in the early essay on the "History and Physiography of Earthquakes" of 1756 in which he argues that the misery and devastation caused by natural phenomena serves to remind us that "the goods of the earth can furnish no satisfaction to our inclination for happiness" (I:460).[36] By contrast, he insists, human life has a "far nobler aim"—an aim that emerges through confrontation with nature and is none other than the realization of our moral calling

and the attainment of "rational self-esteem" (VIII:20, *IUH* 45). The question of nature's contribution to moral progress appears to be less tractable than that of its contribution to political progress. However, if we apply the model we used in relation to Kant's thesis of unsociable sociability, we can construe our relation to nature in the moral context in an analogously dynamic fashion. While in our moral strivings as a species nature is on our side, so to speak, in the sense that we are able to work toward the attainment of rational self-esteem, this work, the work of morality, consists in our emancipation from nature, which nature assists, in her *negative* role as a harsh stepmother, pushing us away from her.

We are now in position to identify the source of the ambiguity that on Allison's interpretation resides in the concept of the purposiveness of nature as it applies to our moral endeavors.[37] Allison views Kant's account of our moral independence from nature as mysteriously connected to the idea of natural purposiveness. There need be no mystery, however, if we view this purposiveness negatively as a spur to realize our moral calling. This leaves us with a sobering prospect on history: if we look to history with our moral interests foremost in mind, then the appeal to nature provides us with grounds for hope insofar as reason as a *capacity* is natural to human beings. The development of this capacity, however, is something that takes us away from nature, enabling us to judge nature itself by a value that is *not* nature but morality.

Where does that leave our expectations of progress? The nature-culture dialectic—the way, that is, our natural sociability finds a cultural expression that leads to the taming of our natural impulses—sustains a very limited expectation of progress. At the same time, it introduces the problematic of emancipation from nature and with it a set of concerns that simply exceed the scope of the account we have given so far. Our earlier discussion of culture can help us identify this change of register. "Culture" functions as a pivot between two different types of judgment. The inward focus of culture on human capabilities and their development propels the argument in the direction of an explicitly moral problematic, which ushers in a different type of teleological judgment. The teleological judgment of culture is a particular, temporalized form of a general type of teleological judgment that responds to the subjective need to discover what something is for, what is its end or purpose. We are permitted to view nature teleologically so long as we keep in mind that this is "how our understanding relates to judgments" (V:406, *CJ* 290). With man as our object, however, we are concerned with a creature that *is* capable of entertaining and pursuing ends. Not only this, but, on Kant's account man is "a cause *that acts*

intentionally" in accordance to an idea of a law that has necessity, yet is wholly "independent of the conditions of nature" (V:435, *CJ* 323). For "man, as a moral being," Kant maintains, we cannot go on to ask, for what does he exist? because man is an end in itself. It is still pertinent, of course, to ask under what conditions we can view our rational ends as realizable. In the present context, however, this is not a question about what we can plausibly expect, *given* certain conditions of human nature and social behavior, because now we have to take into account the new given of our moral calling: "Only in man, and even in him only as moral subject, do we find unconditioned legislation regarding purposes" (V:435, *CJ* 323). From the standpoint of agents who are conscious of their moral duty but who have no insight into the actualization of freedom in the sensible world a new type of teleological judgment is possible that allows us to "infer [a supreme cause of nature] and its properties *from* the moral purpose of rational beings in nature" (V:436, *CJ* 324). This "supreme cause" is a wise creator of the world. Thus Kant completes the series of teleological judgments proceeding through conditional judgments of narrowing domains of application. If human beings are cognizant of their moral vocation, then they can view themselves as the final end of creation, and if one pursues the final end of morality, then one must assume the existence of a "*moral* author of the world" (V:452, *CJ* 342).

Kant's ethico-theological argument continues to take into account our nature as frail agents, prone to despair about the success of our moral endeavors. This is already implicit in the kingdom-of-ends formula in the *Groundwork*, rendered by Paton:

> A good man in endevouring to realize a kingdom of ends in this world is acting as if nature were created and governed by an all-wise and beneficent ruler for the ultimate purpose of realising the whole or perfect good (*bonum consumatum*) in which virtue is triumphant and is rewarded with happiness of which it is worthy.[38]

In the *Critique of Judgement*, these concerns are vividly expressed in the section "On the Moral Proof of the Existence of God," where Kant considers the case of a virtuous agent who denies the proposed moral teleology. Choosing Spinoza, as an example of a "righteous man" who "actively reveres the moral law" but who is firmly persuaded that there is no God, he argues that such a man's effort to "bring about the good" soon encounters limits. For "while he can expect that nature will now and then cooperate contingently" with his purpose, "he can never expect nature to harmonise with it" (V:452, *CJ* 341–42). Kant paints a very dark picture of the predicament of the righteous:

> No matter how worthy of happiness they may be, nature, which pays no attention to that, will still subject them to all the evils of deprivation, disease, and untimely death, just like all the other animals on the earth. And they will stay subjected to these evils always, until one vast tomb engulfs them one and all (honest or not makes no difference here) and hurls them, who managed to believe they were the final purpose of creation, back into the abyss of purposeless chaos and matter from which they were taken. (V:452, *CJ* 342)

This striking passage suggests that the hostility of nature, which we have interpreted giving us a clue that morality not happiness is our destiny, is unbearable for the moral agent without the solace of a wise creator of nature. The appeal to a wise creator is not simply intended to console but also to underwrite the task that confronts the moral agent, which is such that by definition cannot be viewed as part of some future this-worldly arrangement. For the goal is not simply to become a better person but, as Paton glosses it, to "realise the whole or perfect good." The practical object is, in other words, something that surpasses the boundaries of possible experience. It is an object of moral striving, but not a goal that can be viewed as attainable in history.[39] We could thus say that morality opens a perspective on history that leads us *beyond* history.

What conclusions can we draw from the foregoing discussion regarding historical progress? It should be clear now that put like this, the question is simply too abstract. The perspective that Kant opens on history changes according to how we determine the goals we set ourselves. As regards the fulfillment of our moral destiny, history can only be viewed as a constant struggle for emancipation from nature; rest is afforded only in ideas that transcend history. This is not just the case with morality however. Support for the thesis that the goal determines how we can view history is provided by Kant's treatment of progress in the domain of international justice. In contrast to "Perpetual Peace," where he treats as symmetrical, and as similarly soluble within a naturalistic framework, the problem of regulating relations between individuals and that of regulating relations between states, in the *Metaphysics of Morals*, he revises his position, attenuating the claims of the attainability of perpetual peace. In the earlier work, he claims that nature "irresistibly wills" (VIII:366, *PP* 113) that justice should gain the upper hand, suggesting that the very same forces of unsociable sociability, which permit the establishment of justice on a national level, contribute to the establishment of international justice.[40] The relations between states, however, are not merely antagonistic; they can develop into relations of actual war. Kant acknowledges this by including the peace as

well as justice among the aims of political practical reason at the international level. However, he fails to give a satisfactory explanation as to how the model of unsociable sociability can help us regard this *double* aim as realizable. The principal difficulty is that it is implausible to treat the state—which Kant himself describes as a forcefield of competing wills—as analogous to an individual pursuing his or her own aims. The revised argument in the *Metaphysics of Morals* suggests a different connection between peace and justice that is not based on the unsociable sociability thesis. "Since a state of nature among nations," Kant argues, "is a condition that one ought to leave in order to enter a lawful condition, before this happens any rights of nations . . . are merely *provisional*" (VI:350, *MM* 156). International justice is a condition for enduring peace, because a cessation of hostilities that is not underwritten by just arrangements will be only temporary. However, from a historical perspective this condition of provisionality is all we can aspire to: "*perpetual peace*, the ultimate goal of the whole Right of Nations, is indeed an unachievable Idea." Because of the concept of perpetuity invoked in it, perpetual peace, just like the "perfect good," does not and cannot correspond to a real state of affairs. While it is historically unattainable, the idea of perpetual peace retains a role in our practical deliberations, guiding our practices and aspirations within history, so that we can view as attainable the establishment of organizations such as "a permanent congress of states" that acts as a tribunal deciding international disputes "in a civil way, as if by a lawsuit, rather than in a barbaric way (the way of savages), namely war" (VI:351, *MM* 157).

By contrast, Kant devotes a lot of effort to showing that other goals can be viewed as describing historically attainable states of affairs. One such goal is justice. Kant's argument about political progress aims to show the plausibility of a future in which actions within the state are regulated in accordance to principles of right, that is, on the basis of respect for the freedom of all. I think that we can also place in this category the social project of rational autonomy. Kant's discussion of the possibilities opened by sharing an increasingly civil and sociable life with our fellows suggests that it is possible to modify to some extent our unsociable traits through the cultivation of what Kant calls "*humanitas aesthetica et decorum*" (VI: 473–74, *MM* 265). This "cultivation of a disposition to reciprocity" offers the hope that however intermittently and imperfectly, we may yet come to recognize that *sapere aude* concerns each and all, and to act on this recognition of the universalist demands of intellectual independence. The question of hope, of what we *may* hope, takes us back to issues

regarding the motivation and execution of Kant's philosophical history to which I turn next.

5. The a priori Thread of History, Providence, and the Possibility of Hope

At the beginning of this chapter we said that Kant invites us to engage in historical reflection from the perspective of an "intellectual inhabitant of the sensible world," taking into account the concerns and aspirations of the "most ordinary, though right-thinking man." The constant appeals to nature in his historical writings bear this out: the emphasis is on *inhabiting* the sensible world, not as a visiting spirit but as an embodied creature facing nature's hostility and accepting its benevolence, confronting one's doubts and despair, encountering the obstacles, comforts, and enjoyment of social intercourse. On the basis of these facts about human nature and human behavior, Kant has sought to estimate the possibilities of success in our rational endeavors. In doing so, however, he is also seeking to tell us something about the future course of history. The aim of such a progressive construction is to give us "hope for better times to come, without which an earnest desire to do something useful for the common good would never have inspired the human heart" (VIII:309, *IUH* 89). Yet, as we saw, Kant also insists that the proposition that history progresses is not just "to be recommended for practical purposes. Whatever unbelievers may say, it is tenable within the most strictly theoretical context" (VII: 88, *CF* 185). In this final section, I want to examine the connection between "strict theory" and the practical need for hope, in order to clarify the philosophical framework that enables Kant to weave nature and history together in undertaking what he terms a "justification (*Rechtfertigung*) of nature—or, better, of providence" (VIII:30, *IUH* 53).

The characteristic feature of philosophical history is that history is considered as a whole; it is the history of the species and not that of particular peoples at particular time slices.[41] To use Kantian vocabulary, the philosopher seeks to *synthesize* the historical manifold. The synthesizing concept is sought in the practical rational interests of human beings for rational autonomy, morality, justice, peace. It is these which provide the "*a priori* thread," or *Leitfad* of history. With this a priori thread we can go through the maze of historical happenings and interpret particular "aspects and signs of our times" (VII:88, *CF* 184), or "distinct indications" (VIII:40, *WE* 58), *as* signs and indications of improvement. But this synthesis presupposes rather than provides us with a progressive outlook.

In his writings on history, Kant undertakes a delicate balancing act: to take into account our rational interests without producing a eudaimonistic fiction or overstepping his own critical boundaries. For this reason, he does not propose to look behind or beyond history in order to decipher providence. He stays strictly *within* history: philosophical history is "only a thought of what a philosophical mind (which ought at any rate be well versed in history) could try out from a different standpoint" (VIII:30, *IUH* 53, translation altered). The difference between empirical and philosophical history is one of standpoint. The philosopher employs the thread of reason to unify the historical manifold. But his is not enough, for the thread does not provide us with a path, and this is what we seek. This is where the hypothesis concerning *nature's* intentions, plans, and purposes becomes useful. The concept of nature is central to what Kant describes a "philosophical attempt to work out a universal history of the world" (VIII:29, *IUH* 51). "We should also note," Kant argues, "that it is more in keeping with the limitations of human reason to speak of nature and not of providence, for reason, in dealing with cause and effect relationships, must keep within the bounds of possible experience" (VIII:362, *PP* 109). From a formal-architectonic perspective, then, Kant's use of "nature" can be seen as a matter of critical discipline and as a means of turning our focus *away* from ambitious and fruitless enquiries into providence and divine justice. But there is also a substantive gain in speaking about nature, for what motivates Kant's philosophical approach to history in the first place is precisely the need to show that given certain facts about human nature progress in political and moral matters is *possible*.[42] This progressive account of history may have no ostensive function (there is no fact of progress), but has an important heuristic role. We cannot use this account to add predictive weight to our expectations of future success—all claims to that effect can only be formulated hypothetically and remain epistemically weak or "uncertain" (VIII:311, *TP* 91)—but we may hold it for practical reasons.

This brings us to the final point about philosophical history. We have already established why nature has an important role in such an account. We have also discovered that it is unbecoming to speak of providence, that this would be tantamount to "donning Icarus's wings" for a speculative flight beyond the realm of possible experience. Yet Kant also claims that the purpose of philosophical history is to justify "nature—or better providence." How are we to reconcile the earlier appeal to modesty with such an ambition? And how to justify providence without claiming to know it? The answer to both questions is directly connected with Kant's treatment of the problem of hope.

Ignorance about the success of our rational projects has an objective side, the realizability side, but also a subjective side, which concerns nothing less than the possibility of *hope* regarding our undertakings. We have previously distinguished between two different perspectives opened on history regarding the different goals we pursue, focusing on what is practically possible for human beings under conditions of possible experience. A different view of history emerges if we take the subjective standpoint, which is that of an *agent*, of an ordinary but *right-thinking* man. From this standpoint, no matter what our goal is we still need hope. It is this problem that renders necessary the justification of providence. Contrary to what Hannah Arendt has argued, Kant has an agent-centered rather than a "contemplative" perspective on history.[43] As we have seen, the philosopher's synthesis of the historical manifold is answerable to the practical interests of historical agents. Lack of hope, or even despair, hinders the pursuit of these interests. It is to remedy this that Kant undertakes to justify providence by making a case for historical progress. When he then entreats us to be "*content* with providence" (VIII:123, *CB* 231), what he in effect says is that we should not become paralyzed by the contemplation of historical evil. When we "contemplate the evils which so greatly oppress the human race," we should seek to right these wrongs, instead of blaming providence and resigning ourselves to the "malaise" of despair (VIII:120, *CB* 231).[44] That we should be content with providence is therefore not a quietistic claim. Rather it is a reminder of our responsibility in respect of our practical commitments; that history is something we also make, rather than passively suffer.

But how can we sustain a hopeful perspective on history? The belief that our actions will bear fruit, or that providence *can* be justified according to what reason demands, is difficult to hold onto in our everyday experience of "political evils" (VII:93, *CF* 189). Kant is aware of this. In "Contest of Faculties," he recounts the story of a doctor who remained resolutely optimistic every time he visited his patients, consoling them with hopes of imminent recovery, until one day, on asking one of his patients after his state of health, he receives the reply: "I am dying of sheer recovery!" (VII:93). The story is instructive with regard to Kant's own endeavor to construct a "philosophical history" and its necessary limitations. The doctor's reassurance of imminent recovery sounds hollow, because it bears no relation to the state his patients are in. Similarly an invocation of providence would be empty (and not just immodest) if it did not take into account the facts with which we are familiar. We could say that Kant's attempt at a philosophical history is an attempt to address the concerns of theodicy from within the critical

framework.[45] Insofar as he invites us to take into account general facts about human behavior and human needs, without seeking after a metaphysical or divine guarantee regarding the success of our rational projects, his philosophical history combines modesty with ambition. It is modest because it presumes to tell us nothing about providence or indeed of the hidden purposes of nature. It is ambitious because it sets out to justify providence by showing how nature can be viewed as amenable to our practical rational projects. From a human perspective then nature is both a helper and an obstacle—both motherly and stepmotherly. Were nature simply nurturing, reason would be our natural state and we would be born rational cosmopolitans. Were she merely hostile, we would not be able to regard reason as one of *our* capacities. While this is not a cure for despair it goes some way toward addressing our need for hope.

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Chapter 4

Nature and the Criticism of Culture

1. Schiller on the Predicament of the "Moderns"

In the concluding paragraph of his essay on "Perpetual Peace," Kant points at encouraging signs of political progress, arguing that "as solutions are gradually found," the task of promoting justice and peace "constantly draws nearer fulfilment" (VIII:386, *PP* 130). In 1795, the same year in which this essay first appeared, Schiller published *On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters* in the journal *Die Horen*.[1] The contrast with Kant's cautious optimism is striking. Schiller rings a call of alarm concerning the destructive effects of modern culture. "We see the spirit of the age," he argues, "wavering between perversity and brutality, between unnaturalness and mere nature, between superstition and moral unbelief" (*NA* XX:321, *AE* 29). He portrays modern man as "wounded" by a culture that condemns entire classes of people to develop "but one part of their potentialities, while of the rest, as in stunted growths, only vestigial traces remain" (*NA* XX:322, *AE* 33). These divisions become entrenched through the "new spirit of government" that enforces a strict separation of ranks and occupations. Taking up Herder's description of the Frederickian state as a "thoughtless machine" ruling over "living dead,"[2] Schiller compares the "complex machinery" of administration of the modern state to "an ingenious clockwork" made up of innumerable "lifeless parts" (*NA* XX:323, *AE* 35). These are human beings "everlastingly chained to a little fragment of the whole," unable to break free and prevented from developing into complete persons. "Thus," he concludes, "little by little the concrete life of the individual is destroyed in order that the abstract

idea of the whole may drag out its sorry existence" and society "disintegrates into a state of primitive morality, in which public authority has become but one more party, to be hated and circumvented" (*NA* XX:325, *AE* 37).

Schiller's depiction of modern life in terms of specialized labor and learning, and of the modern state as a mechanical life form that imprisons and deforms human beings, is alien to Kant's philosophy. In both tone and content his account echoes Herder's use of criticism as a wakeup call that throws "fire and burning coal on the skull of our century."[3] In fact, the *Aesthetic Letters* combine the two conceptions of philosophical authorship we encountered earlier: the philosopher as critic and the philosopher as educator. As we shall see, Schiller carries out both roles through close engagement with Kant's philosophy. His indictment of modern culture is a direct challenge to Kant's portrayal of the age. In place of Kant's account of our gradual emergence from self-incurred immaturity, Schiller offers a vision of self-inflicted suffering. Instead of the gradual cultivation of our sociable traits, he depicts a society of alienated and fearful beings. It is not only that he is less hopeful about the effort still required to accomplish key political tasks. He also undertakes a more radical reappraisal of the directions and aims of modern culture, questioning the very possibilities of human development that this culture allows. His principal targets, however, are not social or political, but philosophical. He argues that the dehumanizing structures of modern culture have their theoretical counterpart in modern philosophy that promotes a denatured ideal of humanity in which a divided reason and nature are set at war with one another. Schiller's chief philosophical task is to show how this division can be healed. The thesis that forms the basis of his proposal for an *aesthetic* education is that what can restore harmonious and enlivening relation between reason and nature within the individual is the experience of beauty.

Schiller's aesthetic criticism of modern culture raises a number of issues that are directly relevant to our argument concerning an enlightened public culture. If Schiller is right, then Kant has misread the signs of his age and overestimated the possibilities it offers for participating in a shared project of enlightenment. Schiller's key objection, however, is not that Kant is too optimistic, but that he is plainly wrong insofar as he takes as fundamental the very division between reason and nature that Schiller considers to be at the heart of the problems confronted by the "moderns." What motivates his criticism of Kant is a practical concern with the form of life that this division appears to sanction. A potentially more damaging point is raised by Schiller's positive argument regarding

aesthetic education. Schiller does not offer beauty as an adjunct or complement to an enlightened public culture, but as a radical revision of the shape of such culture. If, as Kant himself argues in his account of the "culture of discipline," the sharing of aesthetic pleasures can have a socializing, indeed a humanizing role,[4] then we should look to the possibilities opened to us by an aesthetic culture, rather than the agonistic culture of enlightenment. Schiller not only argues that what we have described so far as social and political goals, the realization of our freedom and rationality, are best served through aesthetic means, but also that they are best seen as fundamentally *aesthetic* goals.

Why does Schiller believe that the social and political problems he identifies can be resolved through aesthetics? An answer must be sought in his diagnosis of the *source* of these problems. He argues that their origin can ultimately be traced to a characteristically modern separation between the intellect and the senses. Perpetually torn between reason and nature, and incapable of reconciling the two, the modern individual is forever pushed in one or the other direction. The result is either deadening artificiality and severity, or a condition of lawlessness and brutality. Schiller contrasts the wanton lack of self-control of the "lower and more numerous classes" (*NA* XX:319, *AE* 25), with the yet "more repugnant spectacle" of the "cultivated classes," who pervert and suppress the voice of nature (*NA* XX:320, *AE* 27). Since the problem has its source within the individual, Schiller concludes that social and political reform cannot succeed without prior reform at the individual level. We must first aim to restore the harmonious and enlivening relation between reason and nature within the individual. On Schiller's account, this condition of inner harmony is to be brought about through the experience of beauty. Our restoration to ourselves can only be achieved through a process of aesthetic education.

It is this diagnosis that allows Schiller to announce, in the very first of the *Letters*, that his subject "has a direct connection with all that is best in human happiness and . . . noblest in our moral nature" (*NA* XX:209, *AE* 3). This connection is not, however, drawn in Diderotian fashion in the context of digressions or reveries. Schiller stakes a claim for a systematic relation between art, beauty, and human life. This ambitious project represents the culmination of several years of devotion to philosophical questions, which overshadowed and was allowed to take priority over his poetical and dramatic writings.[5] During this period, he produced a rich body of work, including the so-called *Kallias* fragment, *On Grace and Dignity*, and the correspondence with the Duke of Schlesswig-Holstein-Augustenburg that forms the basis of the *Aesthetic Letters*.[6] Taken together, these three broadly contemporaneous works

offer a comprehensive statement of Schiller's early engagement with Kant's philosophy that forms the basis for the project pursued in the *Aesthetic Letters*. In seeking to effect an aesthetic reconciliation of distinct elements within the Kantian architectonic, Schiller addresses issues that are usually associated with the "romantic school."[7] His work, however, does not easily fit this label. It is best seen as striving for a philosophical mean that finds its expression in the ideal of a perfectly poised and "finely attuned soul" (*NA* XX: 412, *AE* 219). Moreover, he pursues this classicist ideal in close engagement with Kant's philosophy that renders the question of his self-confessed intellectual proximity to Kant particularly intriguing.

While Schiller acknowledges the centrality of Kant's ideas to his own thinking, his need for a new approach arises out of a fundamental dissatisfaction with the Kantian model. He charges Kant with representing nature as an enemy and with failing to recognize that we are also sensing, desiring, and feeling beings. Only by attending to these aspects of humanity, Schiller argues, will it be possible to attain a condition of true freedom that is also one of human happiness. By pressing the case for an aesthetic education, Schiller seeks to describe not only an education through beauty, but also an education of *aesthesis*, of the senses and of feelings. This education, in turn, is not to be the exclusive preserve of the cultivated individual, a precious personal possession to be savored in isolation. The end of the educative process is intended to bring about an "aesthetic state," a term Schiller uses to describe both a political ideal and an ethical culture that stands in marked contrast to the modern culture he criticizes in the opening *Letters*. Given the importance Schiller places in this initial diagnosis of the problems of the age, I will begin the appraisal of his position with an analysis of his criticisms of Enlightenment culture. This provides a useful context for the more detailed criticisms of Kant's moral rationalism, which I consider in the following section. In the last two sections I examine Schiller's conception of the aesthetic state and compare it with the model we have found in Kant of a culture of enlightenment.

2. The Failures of Enlightenment

Schiller's discussion of enlightened culture in the *Aesthetic Letters* can be seen to pick up an ongoing thread of what I have termed the "reflective phase" of the German Enlightenment. While not always explicitly articulated, as we have seen, moral and political concerns drive the reflective assessment of the nature and meaning of enlightenment and

give it a distinctive practical focus. Thus, both Mendelssohn and Reinhold seek to incorporate enlightenment into a wider culture and to link theoretical advances with the moral improvement and education of the people. Though unconvinced by such arguments, Herder expresses similar concerns when he denounces the facile and complacent platitudes of theoretical progress and presses the Rousseauean point that increase in knowledge does not bring with it an increase in virtue.[8] The problem of judging the reach and effects of new ideas touches upon practical questions, which in turn raise critical issues about the relation between theory and practice. These themes inform Schiller's writings and can be seen to influence his proposals regarding an aesthetic education.

Schiller presents the *Aesthetic Letters* as a philosophical response to a set of social and political problems. In embedding his discussion within a recognizable social context, he is not simply reinstating the Mendelssohnian concern with culture. He claims historical specificity and timeliness for his work. The historical event that provides the immediate political context is the French Revolution. Schiller seeks to establish a tight link between his philosophical and social diagnosis and what he sees as a paradigmatic example of modern praxis. As he points out in his letter to Augustenburg, what he sets out to do is to examine the philosophical significance of "the experiences of the last decade of the eighteenth century" (*NA* XXVI6:260). He interprets these experiences—that is, the later course of the French Revolution—as signaling the defeat of the Enlightenment project of emancipation. The violent aftermath of the revolution was a crucial factor in his disillusionment with the political potentialities of the age. He records his reactions to the beginning of the Terror and the descent of the revolution into lawlessness in a letter to his friend, Körner, in which he confesses that he can "no longer bear to read the French newspapers" (*NA* XXVI:183). While in an earlier essay, "What is 'Universal History?' and Why It Should be Studied," he hailed what he saw as the dawning of a new "humanitarian" age in which reason and freedom "advance hand in hand," establishing peace and justice universally (*NA* XVII:359–61), in the *Aesthetic Letters*, he takes a different approach. His earlier enthusiasm is replaced by analysis of the failures of the French Revolution and of its significance for the emancipatory and rationalizing aspirations of the age.

Unlike conservative critics in Germany who saw the French Revolution as a testament to the politically destabilizing effects of enlightened vindications of freedom, Schiller saw it as a *betrayal* of these hopes.[9] This betrayal provides him with an opportunity to reassess the way in which these hopes of emancipation were presented

in the first place. For Schiller, it is the failures of Enlightenment itself that lie at the basis of the failures of the revolution. The key failure lies with the dominant conception of freedom as an abstract philosophical truth that addresses the intellect only and remains unconnected with, and indeed hostile to, the domain of feelings and emotions. On Schiller's account it is this theoretically skewed articulation of the emancipatory promise of Enlightenment that created the preconditions for the catastrophic forfeit of that promise in practice. Taking the French Revolution as a paradigmatic case, Schiller argues that if the ideal of freedom is to become a reality, it will first have to divest itself of its abstract philosophical form.

To understand how Schiller comes to this conclusion, it is important to appreciate the centrality of the problem of communication in his work. The question of how best to present philosophical ideas to those who lack philosophical training or inclination is one to which Schiller devotes considerable attention, especially in works such as "On the True Effects of the Properly Run Stage" and "On Bürger's Poetry."[10] Like other *Aufklärer*, Schiller too is concerned with making enlightenment practical and popular. Though he does not employ Reinhold's vocabulary, he is similarly interested in establishing channels of communication that allow demanding concepts to become part of culture and influence people's lives. Whereas for Reinhold, however, it is the philosopher who is entrusted with communicating ideas to the people, for Schiller, it is the artist who is best able to fulfil this task. He argues that because people are generally more receptive to ideas that appear in a poetic or dramatic context, the arts can take on a powerful educative role and contribute to the enlightenment and moral cultivation of the people. "Great and manifold is the contribution of good theatre to moral education (*Bildung*); it is in charge of nothing less than the total enlightenment of the understanding" (*NA* XX:98). By presenting novel and philosophically taxing ideas in a pleasant and thus more accessible form, the artist can extend their reach and make them available to a wider audience. In the essay on the effects of the theater, Schiller describes the theatrical stage as a "communal channel" through which the "light of wisdom pours forth from the thinkers and becomes diffused to the entire state" (*NA* XX:99). Elsewhere, he attributes a similar role to poetry, defining the true "poet of the people" (*Volksdichter*) as the one who, well in advance of the philosopher and the legislator, brings to the people "the boldest truths of reason [presented] in an agreeable" form (*NA* XXII:264). The claim here is not just that art has the power to convey progressive ideas in an effective way, but also that it can rival philosophy in its truth-revealing function.

These early explorations of the educative power of art provide the context for the model of aesthetic education he presents in the *Aesthetic Letters*. However, while Schiller continues to refer to the problem of dissemination and communication of ideas, in the latter work, his approach undergoes a significant transformation. This is due in part to a shift in perspective: he no longer writes from the standpoint of the creative artist, but from that of a philosopher who aims "to bring the subject of inquiry closer to understanding" even at the cost of transporting it "beyond the reach of the senses" (*NA* XX:310, *AE* 5).[11] More significant still is a change in the nature of the problem that he seeks to address. He is no longer concerned merely with the dissemination of ideas, but with their adoption and realization. As we have seen, he considers the ideas of this "enlightened age" (*NA* XX:330, *AE* 49) to have comprehensively failed the test of practice: they have either inspired violence, as in the case of the French Revolution, or apathy, as in the case of the German people.

To the question, what is the "character of the present age, which contemporary events present to us?" Schiller replies by offering a brief but damning survey of the achievements of the age:

> True, the authority of received opinion has declined, arbitrary rule is unmasked and, though still armed with power, can no longer, even by devious means, maintain the appearance of dignity. [. . .]The fabric of the natural state is tottering, its rotting foundations are giving way, and there seems to be a physical possibility of setting law upon the throne, of honouring man at last as an end in himself, and making true freedom the basis of political associations. Vain hope! The moral possibility is lacking and a moment so prodigal with opportunity finds a generation unprepared to receive it. (*NA* XX:319, *AE* 25)

Despite certain obvious parallels between Schiller's social criticism and Rousseau's moral despair at the false gains of modern culture, the perspective of the two authors is very different. Unlike Rousseau, who in the *First Discourse* subverts expectations by arguing that the gains of civilization are hollow, Schiller considers enlightenment as a *genuine* human achievement: "Man has roused himself from his long indolence and self-deception" (XX:319, *AE* 25). And yet a yawning gulf separates enlightened theory from reality: enlightenment. Schiller claims, remains a "merely theoretical culture" (*NA* XXVI:263). The theoretical challenge to the authority of received opinion and arbitrary rule has singularly failed to affect either the way people treat each other or the way in which the affairs of the state are conducted. "Our age is enlightened," he observes, "that is to say, such knowledge has been discovered and

publicly disseminated as would suffice to correct at least our practical principles," but "we still remain barbarians" (*NA* XX:330-331, *AE* 49–51). For Schiller, the palpable discrepancy between the theoretical gains of enlightened reasoning and concrete practical advances points to a weakness in the very conception of enlightened practical principles, rather than simply to a shortcoming in their application.

The concern with finding a proper way of *thinking* about freedom and ethics so as to be better able to become free and ethical is central to Schiller's critical reflection on Enlightenment. It is in this context that he takes issue with what he calls the "pregnant utterance" that Kant uses as the motto of the Enlightenment:

> Dare to be wise! It is energy and courage that are required to combat the obstacles which both indolence of nature and cowardice of heart put in the way of our true enlightenment. (NA XX:331, AE 51)

Schiller's main criticism is that both requirements, energy and courage, are in short supply. The rallying cry of *sapere aude* fails to take into account the real circumstances under which people live and the conditions under which they are asked to apply "enlightened" ideas. It ignores the material conditions of its addressees and thus the considerable obstacles placed before them. We have already encountered a version of this criticism in Hamann's discussion of the political straits in which the immature find themselves. Schiller further points out that the vast majority of the unenlightened, that is to say, the vast majority of people, "are far too wearied and exhausted by the struggle for existence" to concern themselves with their intellectual emancipation. Weighed down by their immediate cares for survival and under the "yoke of physical needs," they lack the energy to respond to such lofty calls. Hamann's and Schiller's criticisms serve to press home the point that the pursuit of a rational ideal of enlightenment has an important political and economic dimension that cannot be ignored. However, perhaps a more important point is concealed in Schiller's reference to "cowardice of heart." While Schiller agrees with Kant that in order to form an independent opinion we must certainly have courage, he points out that the unenlightened are precisely those who, incapacitated by habit and fear, *lack* the necessary confidence and the psychological resources to stand up to error. Such people, he claims, "prefer the twilight of obscure ideas . . . to the rays of truth which put to flight the fond delusions of their dreams" (XX:331, *AE* 51). It is intellectual emancipation that gives people the confidence and the courage to assert their right to use their own understanding. Yet these very qualities appear to be required in order to achieve intellectual emancipation in

the first place. In terms of its practical employment, Schiller concludes, the motto is circular and therefore unusable.

Schiller's criticisms forcefully bring to our attention the way people's particular circumstances affect their ability to respond to the emancipatory injunction "dare to know." In contrast to Kant, Schiller focuses attention not on our intellectual ability but on our *psychological* aptitude, or "character." He insists that unless people have the right character, they will be unable or simply unwilling to make use of their reason. Kant is not oblivious to the existence of such psychological or temperamental obstacles. Indeed, he explicitly discusses the vulnerability of those who, having become accustomed to using "mechanical instruments for thinking," seek to make the first steps toward intellectual emancipation in isolation (VIII:35–36, *WE* 54). Kant's primary concern, however, is to identify the obstacles to free and independent reasoning, not to alleviate the psychological burdens of the immature. To this extent, Schiller is justified in claiming that Kant's "enlightenment of the understanding" (*NA* XX:332, *AE* 53) involves a neglect of the role of feeling; for courage is not only an intellectual virtue, it is also a psychological disposition. Whereas Kant was concerned with the question of what it is to reason freely and to act rationally, Schiller argues that the "more urgent need of our age" is to develop "man's capacity for feeling" (*NA* XX:331, *AE* 51).

Schiller's discussion of the failures of enlightened theory is part of a critical account of the one-dimensionality (*Einseitigkeit*) of modern paradigms of action. Central to this account is the contrast between what he calls the "barbarian," in whom reason prevails over feeling, and the "savage," who is ruled by natural inclinations alone. Despite his fondness for describing modern life in terms of contradictions and oppositions, Schiller's use of this particular opposition is not purely rhetorical, nor is it philosophically idle. In *Grace and Dignity* the strict rule of reason over sensibility is compared to "a monarchy, in which the ruler's strict supervision holds all free movement in check" whereas the governance of natural drives is compared to "a wild ochlocracy" (*NA* XX:281–82). In the *Aesthetic Letters*, it is the violence and lawlessness manifested in the events of the Terror that underscore the descriptions of wanton lack of self-control of the savage. This political-psychological portrait of the age has a philosophical dimension to it, since each character represents a flawed model of human freedom. The savage typifies a fundamentally negative conception of freedom, as freedom from all constraints, which on Schiller's view shades into anarchy. A clear inspiration for this is Hobbes's description of the state of nature in *Leviathan*. Here, unchecked by any common rules of conduct, individuals freely

pursue their desires and inclinations, recognizing no limitations apart from those imposed by nature and ultimately death. The barbarian, on the other hand, who drowns the voice of feeling and desire in order to achieve conformity with the moral law, typifies a positive but oppressive understanding of freedom as rational subjugation of nature. Although Schiller is critical of both these models of freedom, he is principally concerned to challenge the latter, oppressive conception, for it is the defense of just this model that he attributes to Kant.

3. Nature Condemned: The Severity of Kantian Morality

I suggested earlier that one important reason for looking at Schiller's aesthetic philosophy is the way it combines theoretical and practical concerns. What motivates his engagement with Kant's philosophy is a felt imperative to respond to the particular social, political, and cultural challenges faced by the moderns. The confluence of these different preoccupations however presents distinctive difficulties when it comes to the analysis and assessment of his arguments as Eva Schaper comments, "in his writings we find a complex interplay of theory, art and life issues, which makes them often difficult to grasp."[12] What I want to do in this section is to examine the philosophical foundations for Schiller's opposition to the "merely theoretical culture" and to identify the different elements that form his critical engagement with Kant's ethics and aesthetics.

Kant's analysis of aesthetic judgment provides Schiller with the starting point for his own discussion of beauty.[13] Schiller follows Kant in his rejection of both the empiricist position, claiming that aesthetic judgments involve a mere subjective liking for the object or "mere affectibility of the senses" (*NA* XXVI:176), and the rationalist identification of beauty with certain features in the object. Against the latter, Schiller adopts the Kantian position that "the beautiful pleases without a concept" (*NA* XXVI:178). By contrast, he is more selective in his use of Kant's positive argument concerning aesthetic judgment. In the first place, he agrees with Kant that the pleasure we experience when contemplating an object we judge to be beautiful is not a mere physiological response, but rather it involves our cognitive faculties. On Kant's account, the ultimate ground of aesthetic pleasure is the state of harmony or "free play" that obtains when, in apprehending the form of the object, the imagination and the understanding are released from their cognitive tasks (V:217, *CJ* 62). Whereas in Kant the connection between aesthetic pleasure and free play becomes the basis for a cogni-

tivist argument about aesthetic judgment,[14] in Schiller it becomes the basis for an argument about the relation between aesthetics and ethics.[15] The connection is not as far-fetched as it may at first appear, since we find already in Kant the suggestion that in the beautiful "freedom is presented more as in *play* than as subject to a law-governed *task*" (V:268, *CJ* 128).[16] This relation of beauty to freedom suggests to Schiller a possible way of refashioning certain fundamental propositions in Kant's ethics. What Schiller finds in equal measure inspiring and unsatisfactory is Kant's analysis of moral agency in terms of the principle of autonomy, which requires that one submit one's will only to self-given laws; as Kant writes, "[man] is subject only to his own and yet universal laws" (VI:432). For Kant, the idea that human beings must view themselves as bound by laws to which they freely assent, insofar as they are also the legislators, is intended to capture a conception of freedom as a project shared by all rational beings. Since Kant believes that the sole ground of the dignity of human beings qua rational beings is their autonomy, his primary concern in formulating this principle is to establish it as a criterion of rational agency. While Schiller adopts the Kantian idea of freedom as autonomy, his aim is markedly different, for he seeks to bring about a *reconciliation* between reason and sensuous nature.[17] It is precisely this aim that motivates his selective appropriation of Kant's aesthetics and ethics.

Schiller often presents his project as one of clarification of the *meaning* of Kant's ethics. He thus argues that the ideas contained in the "practical part of the Kantian system" are presented in a "technical form . . . which veils their truth from our feeling" (*NA* XX:310, *AE* 5, translation altered), and that "the austere purity and scholastic form in which the Kantian ideas are presented confers on them a severity and strangeness that are alien to their content" (*NA* XXVI:258). In *On Grace and Dignity*, Schiller explains that the severity with which Kant presents his conception of duty can allow those with a "weak intellect" to confuse moral duty with "monkish asceticism" (*NA* XX:107). Such claims notwithstanding, it soon becomes apparent that Schiller is not engaged in a project of mere clarification. His criticism of the severity and strangeness of Kant's ideas leaves little doubt that he intends to revise them quite considerably and to replace the destructive struggle between reason and nature, which he believes to follow inevitably from Kant's conception of autonomy, with a state in which natural drives and rational law are "in harmony with one another and man is at one with himself" (*NA* XX:280).

But what precisely is the substantive disagreement with Kant? The basic objection is that Kant's moral philosophy remains inaccessible to

feeling. Schiller develops this claim into two distinct arguments: that Kant's moral theory is ineffective, and that it is oppressive. The first criticism represents a further elaboration of the inaccessibility thesis. Schiller argues that the heart is closed to the truth presented by the intellect, in other words, that knowing what one ought to do is not enough to make one *want* to do it (*NA* XX:310, *AE* 5).[18] The second criticism forms the philosophical counterpart to his analysis of the character type of the barbarian. Schiller claims that it is wrong to act without, or indeed against, natural inclination for this produces unhappy and damaged human beings in whom natural feelings of sympathy and human fellowship are extinguished. In this latter case, the experience of the moral agent is taken to be paradigmatic of the modern experience of the irreconcilable demands of reason and nature. However, it seems that both of these criticisms cannot hold at once: either Kant's moral philosophy is ineffective or its effects are reproachable. This contradiction arises because of the incompatible roles Schiller ascribes to the faculty of reason. He must hold *either* that reason is unable to determine the will independently of our inclinations *or* that it is wrong for reason so to determine the will.

Schiller's first criticism addresses what has become known as the "motivational" problem in Kant's moral philosophy.[19] This problem goes to the heart of Kant's moral theory because it targets the very model of agency he employs. Kant argues that pure reason alone can determine the will, that is to say, that pure reason can of *itself* be practical. This claim is based on a conception of human agency that differs radically from empiricist models. On the standard empiricist view, motives are to be understood as *causes* of actions, literally moving us to act; the will is merely the last appetitive link in this causal chain. Kant proposes instead that we view motives as underlying *intentions* and that the will be seen as the capacity to choose which of these motives/intentions to follow. In this way, he opens up a space for rational deliberation about the principles that guide our choices and thus structure or determine our will. This, in turn, allows him to claim that reason alone, in the absence of any antecedent inclinations, *can* determine our will. In short, for Kant, we act on reasons and not on inclinations, even though we may decide to count an inclination *as* a reason for action. It is clear from the aim that Schiller sets himself—namely, to show how reason and feeling can *codetermine* human behavior—that he wants to hold onto certain features of Kant's account of rational agency. His problem is how to make this account compatible with according a significant role to feeling and sensibility. For this, he does not need to establish that reason is insufficient for action, or to show

that human beings simply do not act in this way. Rather, he needs to show that a moral theory that asks us to act on rational principles alone possesses undesirable consequences. Thus, nothing is lost by abandoning the first criticism and turning instead to the more convincing of his two arguments, and the one he should have decided for—namely, that without the active participation of desire and feeling, reason becomes tyrannical or "barbaric."

This second criticism concerns the role of dispositions or feelings as motives for actions. Kant considers such nonrational motives "heteronomous" and refuses to accord them any moral weight. Only actions performed out of respect for the moral law are truly moral and can be considered morally worthy. This feature of Kant's philosophy has provoked a range of critical responses and continues to be the subject of intense debate. Contemporary critics have pointed out that Kant's law-based view of morality presents us with an impoverished account of moral action because it underplays or excludes elements which are vital to our moral deliberations, including an account of the sort of person we seek to become and of how we judge particular moral situations.[20] While Schiller's arguments represent an important antecedent to those criticisms, his aim is in the first place to show that acting consistently against our inclinations results in the despoliation of natural sympathy and kindness, leaving the moral agent in a state of constant struggle against and mistrust of all that is natural or "immediately pleasing" (*NA* XX:304). For Schiller, the command to obey the moral law is equivalent to a command to vanquish our sensuous nature: "in the exercise of moral duties, sensibility is found in a state of constraint and oppression, in particular when it makes a painful sacrifice" (*NA* XX:298). Turning Kant on his head, Schiller maintains that it is submission to the moral law that is experienced as a form of heteronomy. For in doing so the moral agent forsakes what is most his own—his desires, feelings, and inclinations—and submits himself to a law that appears as something alien and external (*NA* XX:280).[21] Despite this grim view he presents of Kantian morality, Schiller does not advocate a morality based on feelings or emotions. He has a yet darker view of the man "who lets himself be governed by natural drive" abandoning any claim to autonomy (*NA* XX:281). His aim is rather to show that it is possible for "sensibility and reason, duty and inclination to be in harmony with one another" (*NA* XX:288). Before we turn to examine how he proposes to carry out this project and how successful it is, we need to examine whether his criticisms of Kant's ethics hit the right target.

Is Schiller right to depict the predicament of the moral agent in this way? An initial answer can be found in Kant's own reply to Schiller's

criticism in *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*. Though brief, Kant's response is illuminating. He vigorously denies that duty is a grim task performed with a heavy heart. This he argues is a sign of a "slavish frame of mind" that betrays a hatred for the moral law (VI:23–24, *Religion* 19n.). Indeed, he claims that it is "hardly necessary" to spell out the answer to the question of whether the temperament of virtue is joyous or "fear-ridden and dejected." The claim that pleasure and morality are not necessarily in contradiction with each other is one Kant had already made in the *Critique of Practical Reason*. There Kant argued that a feeling of satisfaction, which he also designates as a feeling of "pleasure" or "agreeableness," arises out of the consciousness of the rational determination of the will (V:117–18, *CPrR* 121–22).[22] He specifies, however, that this feeling is not to be construed as the determining ground of the will. It is merely a sense of satisfaction and happiness that can accompany our recognition that we perform our duty. In this context, Kant is concerned to refute the Epicurean idea that morality attracts us because it affords us a certain pleasure. Kant's clarification of the role of pleasure in his account of morality is also relevant to the point Schiller raises, that the performance of one's duty is necessarily an onerous task. In replying to Schiller, Kant again stresses that it is important to distinguish between what is necessary and what is not. Only the idea of duty carries strict necessity. For this reason, duty alone captures the binding and categorical nature of the commands of morality. A graceful disposition cannot be viewed as obligating us in the same way. Indeed, we cannot rationally *demand* that people display such a disposition. Kant acknowledges, however, that moral feelings, such as the love of virtue, are not to be construed merely as desirable embellishments, but play an important role in the task of *becoming* moral. He thus frequently discusses the various ways in which these feelings can be awakened and cultivated in the individual, either indirectly through the culture of discipline, which strengthens one's resolve, or directly through imitation of "good examples" and "habituation."[23] Nonetheless, as we have already seen in the previous chapter, Kant is careful to describe culture not in Schillerian terms of an education of nature, but rather in terms of *emancipation* from nature. There is, in other words, a clear limit to his use of moralizing teleology, understood as the description of morally enabling practical conditions such as the culture of discipline or a virtuous society, and moral teleology proper that analyzes the necessary intellectual commitments that a moral agent incurs, such as the belief in a divine creator of the world.

Therefore, although the full articulation of Kant's moral theory affords us a richer understanding of moral agency than his analysis of

duty initially seems to allow, it seems that we can only uphold the principle of autonomy if we hold onto an austere reading of his account of moral deliberation. It is precisely this dilemma that Schiller seeks to overcome, by effectively revising the principle of autonomy. His aim is not simply to complement Kant's account by adding the missing element of character or feeling. The "way to the head," he writes, "*must* be opened through the heart" (*NA* XX:332, *AE* 53, emphasis added). The force of this "must" reveals a very different conception of emancipation from that of Kant, one in which the heart rather than the intellect, is the primary addressee. Central to Schiller's account is the idea that feeling *should* have an active role in determining morality. The difficulty lies in precisely determining this role. In his earlier works, Schiller tends to adopt a more descriptive, rather than prescriptive approach, almost as if he wants to entice his readers by presenting them with aesthetic aspects of certain features of human behavior and character that appear to bespeak a harmonious collaboration of reason and sensibility. It is only in the *Aesthetic Letters* that he undertakes to show exactly how appreciation of aesthetic values can bring about such a reconciliation and have the morally desirable effects described in the earlier works.

The difficulties confronting Schiller's early attempt to address the problems he identifies in Kant's ethics can be seen in his account of the beautiful act described in the *Kallias*. The argument is presented in the form of a parable. Seeking to clarify what he calls the "kinship" of beauty and morality, Schiller tells the story of a wayfarer who, attacked by robbers, is left wounded and naked in the freezing cold. Several people pass by, each reacting differently to the man's plight. One of them stops, hears the man's retelling of his misfortunes, and after some deliberation, offers him his coat and horse, making clear that though frail and tired himself, he cannot ignore the call of duty; "duty commands to put myself at your disposal" (*NA* XXVI:196). In the final version of the story, a heavily laden traveler approaches, lays down his burden, and bids the wounded man to climb on his back so that he can be carried to the nearest village. He offers his help freely, without a second thought. To the question of what will happen to his load, left by the side of the road, he responds: "That I do not know, and it does not concern me. . . . What I do know is that you need help and that it is my due to help you" (*NA* XXVI:197). The former act, Schiller comments, is "*purely*, though no more than, *moral*"; it is performed out of respect for the moral law and against the man's inclinations (*NA* XXVI:196). By contrast, the act of the laden man is "beautiful." Both travelers do the right thing, but while one must struggle to overcome

contrary desires, the other acts effortlessly, without pausing to think what duty demands of him; as Schiller puts it, "he forgets himself" in the act (*NA* XXVI:198).

What is the adjective "beautiful" then meant to convey here? Clearly, Schiller seeks to add something to the merely moral act. He gives us two ideas about what this might be, by drawing our attention to the effortlessness of the traveler's act and to the way in which he *forgets* himself in the doing of it. We could say that the traveler experiences a pull toward the right thing, which is not dependent on ideas about right and duty, and also that he is absorbed in the deed itself rather than in reflection about what the situation demands of him as agent. Now "immediacy" and "independence from concepts" are precisely, as we have seen, the two key features of Schiller's conception of the beautiful. Following Kant, Schiller emphasizes that the beautiful pleases "without a concept," without yet being a "mere sensuous affect" (*NA* XXVI:177–78). In applying these terms in the context of morality, Schiller seeks both to expand the domain of the beautiful and to show the limits of Kant's conception of the moral act as one that is done purely out of duty, against the pull of inclination and the "propensities of feeling" (VI:399). It is important to note that the contrast he draws here is not one between duty and emotion, or the propensities of feeling. The traveler's effortless action already contains an awareness of the moral ought ("I know it is my *due* to help you"). Therefore, the beautiful act is not a manifestation of a spontaneous outpouring of fellow feeling, which would be the moral equivalent of mere sensuous affect (or of the "ochlocracy" of inclination). Characteristic of the beautiful act is the *absence* of inner struggle that is all too evident in the example of the dutiful act.

If we ask, however, how such a state of affairs comes about, we are likely to be disappointed. All we have of moral beauty is the negative characteristics of immediacy and absence of reflection, as if beauty were grafted onto morality. Although we are told why this good act is *also* beautiful, Schiller fails to give us an account of the goodness of the beautiful act. The effortlessly performed beautiful act elides the reflective aspect of Kant's account of morality, but only because it takes place in a context in which moral reflection about what one ought to do is made to look entirely unnecessary. Our own attraction to the beautiful act conceals the unearned certainty that this is an act that would indeed have enjoyed our reflective endorsement. In other words, the beautiful act merely happens to be good. Schiller offers neither an account of the good nor an account of how it may be achieved. As a result, spontaneity itself appears to be the criterion of virtue.

Schiller later recognized this problem and sought to address it in the *Aesthetic Letters*. There he substitutes his earlier conception of effortless virtue with the notion of a "playful" disposition which, though not in itself virtuous, disposes us to respond virtuously. He anchors this notion in an ideal of human nature and offers an account of how it may be achieved. The ideal of playfulness describes a certain relation of unforced cooperation or balance between the rational and affective aspects of human nature. This, in turn, conditions our behavior, enabling us to respond ethically to others. Since it is the experience of beauty alone that can have this effect on human character, the achievement of this goal becomes now the task of aesthetic education.

4. Schiller's "Aesthetic State" and Its Criticism

It is clear from the foregoing analysis that Schiller views his project in the *Aesthetic Letters* as having not only moral but also political significance. In his letters to Augustenburg, he already states that beauty is to be regarded as a pressing "philosophical concern" as long as the political tasks of emancipation and of creating a truly free state remain unrealized.[24] And in the published *Letters*, he states explicitly that "if man is ever to solve [the] problem of politics in practice, he will have to approach it through the problem of the aesthetic, because it is only through beauty that man makes his way to freedom" (*NA* XX:312, *AE* 9). In this section, I want to examine how successfully Schiller's proposal for an aesthetic education fulfils these political aims and whether he is justified in his belief that the path to freedom is opened through "the aesthetic."

Schiller's account of beauty provides the basis for an account of the ideal polis or "aesthetic state" (*aesthetischer Staat*). He contends that this political model constitutes an advance over the civil state, which he describes as a "state of rights." The principal advantage is that the citizens of the aesthetic state do not need to limit their freedom, as the citizens in a state of rights are obliged to do. Instead, they are released from anything that "might be called a constraint" (*NA* XX:410, *AE* 215). The aesthetic state stands in direct contrast to Kant's social and political model: it reverses Kant's assumptions regarding human behavior, the unsociable sociability thesis, and contradicts his conception of political freedom as requiring coercive external legislation. Beyond this, as a model of an ethical culture, the aesthetic state contrasts not only with the modern culture, as Schiller describes it in the opening *Letters*, but also with the Kantian proposal

for popular enlightenment set out in a pluralistic, dissenting, and distinctly nonmoral conception of public culture.

Schiller seeks to show that aesthetic education can decisively shape our behavior and that it can therefore provide a better basis for social and political cooperation than either moral or political laws. The instrument for this "ennobling of character" is "fine art" (*NA* XX:333, *AE* 55). Art does not achieve this by assuming a didactic, moralizing stance, but through its enduringly beautiful form. Beauty exerts an ennobling influence on character that reaches both the savage and barbaric types. Aesthetic experience has both a releasing (*auflösende*) and a tensing (*anspannende*) effect: "we find ourselves at one and the same time in a state of utter repose and supreme agitation, and there results a wondrous stirring of the heart for which the mind has no concept nor speech any name" (*NA* XX:359, *AE* 109). This experience can have such profound effects upon us that it can alter both our practical and our theoretical engagement with the world around us. Indeed, Schiller claims that in this state of release and invigoration we are able to "*desire* more nobly" (*NA* XX:388, *AE* 169, emphasis added).

Aware of the many possible objections to these ambitious claims, Schiller emphasizes that his argument applies only to the "art of the Ideal" (*NA* XX:311, *AE* 7). Such art enjoys an "absolute immunity from human arbitrariness" and stands above the "sorry products of time" (*NA* XX:333–34, *AE* 55–57). Because its beauty is timeless, or at least able to withstand the vicissitudes of temporal change, it opens up "living springs" from which we can draw sustenance in times of adversity (XX:333–34, *AE* 55–57.).[25] However, if art is to perform the social and political tasks Schiller claims for it, he must be able to show that such an experience can produce lasting effects on our behavior. He must also address the problem identified by Rousseau; namely, that far from advancing the cause of virtue and freedom, art has often been complicit with political oppression. Schiller confronts these difficulties head on. He admits that "there are voices worthy of respect raised against the effects of beauty and armed against it with formidable arguments drawn from experience" and that it "must give pause for reflection that in almost every historical epoch in which arts flourish, and taste prevails, we find humanity at a low ebb" (*NA* XX:339, *AE* 67). Schiller's strategy in responding to this objection is to argue that it is based on empirical evidence, which is of little value when it comes to assess the effects of beauty. He argues that we cannot use past experience as a guide to judge art or to evaluate its effects on society in general because there are many rival conceptions of beauty and thus we cannot be sure that "which in experience we call beautiful is justly enti-

tled to the name" (*NA* XX:340, *AE* 69). There is an ambiguity here in Schiller's dismissive use of "experience" and "empirical" to refer to historical evidence and, by extension, to unphilosophical, unexamined views of beauty, and the way in which he takes aesthetic experience as the cornerstone of his own argument concerning aesthetic education. What causes this ambiguity is his attempt to distance himself from empirical/historical accounts of the effects of art, while simultaneously introducing his enquiry into aesthetic experience. What he seeks to establish through the latter is whether a "pure rational concept [*Vernunftbegriff*] of beauty" can be found that is not "derived from any actual experience, but rather itself corrects and regulates our judgement of every actual case" (*AE* 69). In short, the object of enquiry is not any particular aesthetic experience, but rather aesthetic experience as such. To discover this *Vernunftbegriff* of beauty, Schiller argues, we must proceed "transcendentally" (*NA* XX:340, *AE* 71). By this, he means that the concept of beauty is to be deduced from "pure concept of human nature" or the necessary features of the human mind that make this experience possible.

Schiller's transcendental procedure is broadly adapted from Kant. The features that are relevant for understanding Schiller's method concern the process of rational reflection through which Kant seeks to show that certain a priori concepts bear directly on key aspects of human experience. Taking his cue from Kant, Schiller seeks to establish that a pure rational concept of beauty is necessary for aesthetic experience. He proposes to show that this is the case by investigating what he terms the "pure concept of human nature." His forbiddingly abstract presentation of this project should not obscure its real purpose, which is to show that beauty indeed addresses *both* our feeling and our intellect and, thus, that it can play a role in healing the rift between them.

Schiller's key to analyzing the constituent elements of the experience of aesthetic pleasure is his account of the drives (*Triebe*). He identifies two fundamental forces or impulses that operate within us. The first he calls the "formal drive" (*Formtrieb*) and the second the "sensuous drive" (*sinnlicher Trieb*). The first represents a rationalizing, abstracting, and ordering tendency, while the second is characterized as a receptive capacity that alerts us to the changing manifold of the physical environment.[26] Schiller maintains that when these two drives enter into harmonious cooperation, the individual can be said to be free. However, this state of harmonious cooperation between the drives is only brought about by the operation of a third drive, which he terms the "play drive" (*Spieltrieb*). This third drive is brought into operation specifically by the individual's experience of beauty.

A conceptual antecedent to Schiller's notion of the play drive is to be found in Kant's idea of a "free play" between the faculties of imagination and understanding. This idea fulfils an important explanatory function in Kant's analysis of beauty in the first part of the *Critique of Judgement*. Kant seeks to uphold a distinction between "judgements of taste" (such as "this rose is beautiful"), and cognitive judgments (such as "this rose is red"). On Kant's account, the faculties of imagination and of the understanding perform different tasks in making these two judgments. In cognitive judgments, their role is essentially subsumptive: we place the particular rose under the general concept "red" by judging from similar examples we have encountered in the past. In aesthetic judgments, by contrast, we are barred from performing this task, for "beauty" does not function as a general concept in this way. We cannot identify that something is beautiful simply by virtue of the fact that it possesses certain features. In the experience of beauty, then, the faculty of the understanding and the faculty of imagination are released from their usual cognitive tasks and enter a state of free play. in which we attend to the object without subsuming it under a determinate concept. Kant describes this experience as a free and pleasurable state of harmony between the faculties.

While acknowledging Kant's influence, Schiller strives to correct what he views as a weakness in Kant's account—namely, the tendency to overintellectualize aesthetic experience.[27] By using the model of the drives he seeks to restore the *physical* dimension to our experience of beauty. The experience Schiller describes does not merely involve the engagement of our mental faculties in a state of play, but affects the whole of our being. This attempt to achieve greater concreteness, however, is imperiled by Schiller's vacillation regarding the exact role of the play drive.[28] On the one hand, he claims that the play drive keeps the formal and the sensuous drives confined to their proper objects so that they do not encroach upon each other's territory (*NA* XX:350-352, *AE* 91–93). However, he also describes the play drive as effecting a reconciliation of the other two forces so as to bring about a unity between them so that they are working "in concert" (*NA* XX:352, *AE* 95).[29] Similarly, when he uses the metaphor of the scales to describe its effects, he identifies the play drive as a balancing force that brings the other two drives into a state of equilibrium (*NA* XX:375, *AE* 141).

The indeterminacy that plagues Schiller's account of the role of the play drive can at least partially be traced to the complexity of the experience he seeks to describe. Our experience of beauty is supposed to afford us a release from the persistent demands of both reason and nature, while also replenishing our ordinary, impoverished sense of

what is possible. In order to account for the full range of aesthetic experience, Schiller sometimes describes this "aesthetic condition" as a "nought" that results from the mutual cancellation of the sensuous and the formative drives (*NA* XX:379, *AE* 151, translation altered).[30] At the same time, this nought is also a kind of plenum, "a disposition which contains within it the whole of human nature" (*NA* XX:379, *AE* 151). The relation between these two aspects of the aesthetic condition can be understood as follows. The liberation from subjection to the formal and to the sensuous drives results in a newly found equanimity and balance. Freed from the persistent and one-sided demands of the two drives, we gain for the first time an awareness of full human potentiality. The aesthetic condition, then, is one of "pure determinability" (*NA* XX:375, *AE* 141) through which we experience the possibilities that are open to us, and finally "the possibility of becoming human beings" (*NA* XX:378, *AE* 149).[31]

For all its richness, however, Schiller's account of aesthetic experience remains descriptive rather than probative. The connection between the effects of beauty on the drives and on the behavior of the individual remains loose and unexplained. The awakening of the play drive may well heighten our powers of discrimination and synthesis, enabling us to behave better and to be more successful in the pursuit of knowledge in some general sense. But it need not do so. The state of play in fact necessarily remains indeterminate and open. This is a direct result of the doubly free character of aesthetic education. Aesthetic education is free first in the sense that it is utterly unforced; it is unguided by determinate content and is dependent on the individual's free response to beauty. Further, the proposed outcome of such an education is the achievement of freedom, that is, the formation of a person who is open and able to embrace an infinity of potentiality.

The fundamental indeterminacy of Schiller's account of aesthetic education mars his more practical proposals, the suggestion that the education of human character and the nurturing of all human faculties should become a task for culture.[32] Schiller is unable to specify how *culture* can assume the role he attributes to beauty and to the "*purely aesthetic* experience" (*NA* 20:380, *AE* 153). This difficulty, in turn, has important consequences for Schiller's political proposals regarding the aesthetic state. In contrast to the "state of rights," which he describes as a dynamic union of individuals each of whom pursue their own ends, the aesthetic state is a "joyous kingdom" in which the citizens "released from all that might be called constraint" treat each other with spontaneous good will (*NA* XX:410, *AE* 215). We could say that the aesthetic state is one in which sociability has been rid of its unsociable

aspect. The main source of potential friction among the citizens, the imbalance between intellect and feeling, no longer exists. Just as the aesthetic condition is one of free harmony between the competing drives in the individual's psyche, the aesthetic state is a state of free harmony among its citizens: they behave naturally without behaving capriciously and are civilized without being oppressed. In the aesthetic state not only is external legislation redundant but politics are redundant as well.[33]

Ironically, although Schiller accuses Kant of neglecting the embodied, sensible nature of human beings, it is he who provides us with a disembodied model of social and political life. As we have seen, Kant is careful not to give a one-sided depiction of human character, placing equal emphasis on both cooperative and antagonistic traits. Moreover, he seeks to show that these natural traits work usefully in combination. On Kant's account, antagonism can be productive, bespeaking a primitive sense of freedom and individuality. By contrast, Schiller's proposals hinge on the achievement of an "ideal character," or the coming to being of an "ideal man." He admits that his thoroughly depoliticized and highly abstract view of the state may only be an ideal that can only be very partially realized "in some few chosen circles" (*NA* XX:412, *AE* 219).[34] This admission is much more damaging than Schiller seems to appreciate, for it comes after another admission; namely, that the kind of beauty his account requires may rarely, if ever, be encountered in reality (*NA* XX:360, *AE* 111).[35] Schiller thus casts away the very claims to relevance with which he first announced his project—that beauty can have a vital role in political emancipation. Not only is the truly ennobling aesthetic experience he describes placed beyond our reach, but his very model of political emancipation is of such an exacting nature that it can rarely, if ever, be achieved.

5. Nature, Reason, and the Beginning of Culture

The playful behavior of the citizens of the aesthetic state can be seen to embody the ideal of effortless virtue and gracious goodness set out in Schiller's earlier works. Although it is the product of a cultural and educative process, the aesthetic state is supposed to encourage such natural displays of goodwill like the "beautiful act" described in the *Kallias*. The key difference, which sets the aesthetic state apart from the earlier account of beauty, is the explicit social and political dimension of Schiller's argument in the *Aesthetic Letters*. The aesthetic state is the culmination of a systematic study of the modern sundering of nature and reason. On Schiller's account, this problem is *already* social and

political. Hence, while the solution he proposes targets the individual, the aim ultimately is to present us with a different model of social interaction, a culture that is unlike the dehumanizing culture of "us moderns" and a state that is not like a destructive machine. The problem, however, as we have seen, is that the means by which this is to be achieved are inadequately defined and the end result itself, the aesthetic state, shades into abstraction. Schiller's fusion of reason and nature does not give content to the abstract edicts of reason, but rather becomes itself an empty ideal. What I want to argue now is that this is an *inherently* problematic ideal that produces either too restrictive a conception of social interaction or one that is too vague.

The goal of Schiller's aesthetic education is the achievement of a fully naturalized reason. This goal is foreign to Kant. It does, however, express a characteristic Enlightenment hope. To become effortlessly virtuous and spontaneously reasonable is a recognizable expression of the desire to make enlightenment practical, to enable the new ideas to become part of everyday life, to affect people's behavior and to change society for the better. The intellectual affiliation of Schiller's conception of an education into freedom and virtue is with Reinhold's *Vernunftbildung* or indeed with Lessing's *The Education of Humankind*.[36] In this work, Lessing reconstructs the entire history of humanity precisely in terms of the stages of a gradual process of education. After the early stages of "childhood" and "boyhood" of humanity, Lessing envisages a state of "adulthood," which is pointedly placed in the future, in which people will not need religious guidance for their behavior but will follow reason alone: "they will do good because it is good, not because of arbitrary compensations."[37] Lessing describes this as a time of fulfilment or completion (*Vollendung*) in which humanity will reach the "highest degree of enlightenment and purity."[38] This final stage of adulthood or of maturity resembles Schiller's aesthetic state not only in the hope it expresses of a freely virtuous human life, but also in the way it holds up a mirror to the imperfect, turbulent present from which this hope is issued. Lessing's account of maturity is an argument for the mutual toleration and recognition of the religious and rationalist points of view,[39] just as Schiller's aesthetic state is an argument for the rehabilitation of feelings and emotions in ethics and for the need to counteract the fragmenting tendencies of modern culture.

The problem is that once we view these educational ideals as models for what the future might realistically bring, rather than as comments on what the present lacks, we are disappointed. Why is this so? Why is the task of describing a unified conception of human life so difficult? We can answer this by looking at the way the problem is

posed in the arguments we have so far examined. Central here is Diderot's argument that there is no natural or rational fact the intuition of which can provide us with a reliable means of harmonizing our moral or aesthetic intuitions. One important consequence of this is that it opens up the question of whether an integrated, normative conception of humanity is possible, one in which not only different aspects of human character harmoniously coexist but also different individuals inhabiting different cultures recognize themselves. Both Rousseau and Schiller offer a positive answer giving, respectively, the just state and the beautiful work of art the task of articulating and realizing this ideal. What motivates both accounts is the desire to show that freedom is a condition to which human beings can realistically aspire. However, it is precisely freedom that creates the problem in both accounts. Whereas Rousseau's attempt to naturalize moral and political behavior results in an oppressive proposal, Schiller's ideal appears insubstantial and vague. Rousseau's conception of moral citizenship is overdetermined: there is no space for interpretation, variation, or evolution. To ensure stability, Rousseau eliminates the possibility of thinking and acting otherwise than in accordance with the group to which one belongs; the citizen is a Corsican or a Pole perfectly and absolutely. Although freedom is a feature of the original contract that each particular state would invoke to legitimate its political authority, it is not a feature of the daily political life of that state.

Schiller, by contrast, seeks to make freedom so natural to us that it is unremarkable: the citizens of the aesthetic state are unaware of any structures or codes of behavior. Harmony prevails because each has achieved already *internally* a perfect balance between the sensuous drive and the form drive, before these drives becomes manifest in the onesidedness of instinct and of rational demand. The goal of harmony among the citizens is achieved by an education that successfully eliminates the possibility of friction between particularistic reasoning and the common good as well as between desire and virtue. But this is precisely the problem. What both Rousseau and Schiller appear to ignore is that the occurrence of such friction is not necessarily the sign of a society at the edge of anarchy, but of a society that allows people the latitude to think for themselves. The strength of Kant's proposal is that it acknowledges precisely this—namely, that to confront a situation where alternatives *are* possible and the right thing is neither obvious nor natural is a condition for the exercise of our freedom and not an impediment to it.

Schiller's failure bespeaks a deeper problem that has to do with the fundamental philosophical direction of his search for unity. His account

is onesided because he views the boundaries between different spheres of human behavior and the differences between the various demands that are made on human beings as inherently problematic. The resulting ideal is of a limit-free state in which "every being forgets its limits" (*NA* XX:412, *AE* 217). Whereas ordinary human beings are confronted with choices between different demands and pursuits, those who are formed by beauty need not distinguish between ethical, social, political, or aesthetic demands. They inhabit a culture in which taste shapes everything, including the "mysteries of science" (*AE* 217). Aesthetic education, in other words, becomes the means by which beauty, truth and goodness are successfully meshed together. Put differently, the search for a substantive ideal of humanity concludes with a description of a humanity that is unwavering, unlimited, and untroubled.

By contrast, Kant's conception of rational autonomy, which includes formal principles of reasoning and substantive requirements and commitments, presents us with an ideal that is also a realizable project for recognizable, fallible human beings. The model of social interaction described in the culture of enlightenment has a progressive dimension that is not predicated upon the radical transformation of the immature. Certainly, as we saw in the previous chapter, the various practical projects that Kant describes are nested within one another. They do not, however, form a linear narrative of historical progress along the lines of an "education of humanity." Whereas the formal unification of the different rational projects we pursue creates problems of potential conflict, which Kant fails adequately to recognize, it also allows these projects to remain irreducibly plural rather than merge into a monolithic ideal of ethical citizenship or an empty ideal of all-round perfection. In that respect, we could say about the culture of enlightenment that even when it is in progress, like virtue, it has to begin from the beginning. This is to emphasize that making public use of one's reason is always at the same time a *testing* of the boundaries of interpretation of the principles that can be considered to be acceptable by all public reasoners. The character of a culture of enlightenment is essentially agonistic and dynamic: it is through disagreement and criticism that we make clear to ourselves our implicit normative commitments to universalizable principles and stake our membership in a potentially universal culture of enlightenment.

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Chapter 5

Culture after Enlightenment

1. Enlightenment and Its Discontents

"In what darkness has our daylight sunk."[1] Herder uses this phrase from Lucanus's *Pharsalia* to warn his contemporaries against viewing enlightenment uncritically as the summum of human achievement and aspiration. He alerts his readers to the darker incarnations of the ideals of sociability, tolerance, and intellectual independence: superficiality, moral skepticism, uncertainty.[2] The same motif of shaded light can be found in contemporary critical assessments of the legacy of the European Enlightenment, which emphasize its oppressive, destructive, or deceptive nature. The significance of these contemporary arguments lies less in the historical connections they establish between current ideas or practices and the eighteenth century, and more in the critical perspective they open on the ideals of rational criticism, independence, and maturity. It is important to note from the outset then that the arguments we are about to examine are diagnostically ambitious: in a way that is reminiscent of Rousseau's criticism, they invite us to engage in a process of self-knowledge and to reexamine what sort of life we shape for ourselves by pursuing these goals. We can, of course, refuse this challenge. Engaging in this process of critical self-reflection, however, concerns the very preservation of the notion of rational culture, I have been discussing in this book. My purpose in this chapter is to assess the significance of these criticisms and, in so doing, return to some of the larger issues broached in the introduction.

It has been a central theme of this book that criticism of enlightenment is nothing new. The self-critical strand of enlightenment think-

ing, which I have examined here, emerges partly at least in response to such criticism. This is clearly in evidence in the German debate about the meaning of enlightenment, which is not simply a debate about lexical meaning and current use of a newfangled word, but rather about what is worth defending in the cluster of notions and ideas that come under the term "enlightenment." At the same time, the project of criticizing the enlightenment from a perspective that is *of* the enlightenment brings sharply to focus the problem of what counts as an authoritative defense. Kant's interpretation of enlightenment can be viewed therefore as addressing this crisis of judgment as well as the particular criticisms of the enlightenment project. The debate about the meaning of enlightenment gives voice and, in turn, serves to intensify a debate about the meaning of concepts such "criticism," "reason," "freedom," "culture." These concepts are contested and problematic, rather than taken for granted. Grasping this is essential for understanding the philosophical concerns that shape this eighteenth-century debate, but also for recognizing how they continue to shape philosophical questions that are "live" for us today. The contextualization of Kant's interpretation of enlightenment, I undertake here, serves therefore not just to sharpen the historical focus of his arguments but, most importantly, to open the way of appraising their contemporary significance.

The substantive criticisms of the legacy of the European Enlightenment I will be discussing in this chapter originate in very different theoretical projects, yet they converge in a bleak assessment of the emancipatory possibilities of a culture ruled by reason. Although some of the issues raised in this context appear to reiterate and to expand upon arguments we discussed in the previous chapter, they are also rooted in characteristically contemporary concerns. I shall consider three sets of criticisms raised within critical theory, poststructuralism, and contemporary feminism. Characteristic of all three perspectives is the concern to show that *current* conditions of social oppression, political injustice, or moral immaturity need to be understood by reference to key aspects of the Enlightenment heritage. The most radical criticism is undertaken by Adorno and Horkheimer in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Adorno and Horkheimer argue that twentieth-century totalitarianism should not be seen as a perversion of enlightened hopes for a rational and free society, but as the truth of a "dialectic of enlightenment," which hides a kernel of irrationality and self-destruction. Enlightened thought, they warn, is not at the vanguard of the liberation of humanity, but rather complicit with universal domination. Foucault's study of power, especially in his analysis of penal systems in *Discipline and Punish*, also contains a warning against complacent

interpretations of our intellectual history. What Foucault seeks to show is how the emergence of certain types of justificatory discourses is not the result of a process of enlightenment with regard to universally valid, action-guiding commitments, but rather the effect of an ever-shifting complex of power relations. In this way, he seeks to undercut not only notions of progress, but also the conditions for the possibility of making a theoretical appeal to anything resembling an ongoing project of social and political reform. Finally, I turn to Gilligan's study of developmental psychology, *In a Different Voice*. Gilligan uses the material and techniques of psychological analysis to formulate a feminist ethical perspective, the ethic of care, which she presents as an alternative to the universalistic, rights-based ethics that is part of the Enlightenment heritage. Although she describes a less bleak outcome than either Horkheimer and Adorno or Foucault, her questioning of the basic concepts with which the promise of emancipation is articulated reaches to the very heart of the present debate, for what she argues is that casting maturity in terms of universalizable demands is misleading and finally *immature* because it fails to encompass complexity and plurality.

Taken in conjunction, these authors present enlightenment rationality as instrumental and calculative, punitive and oppressive, gender biased and monolithic. To answer these criticisms it is clearly not enough simply to call for *more* enlightenment in the hope that its emancipatory promise will eventually become realized. Rather, we must consider how these critical perspectives might enable us to develop and modify our understanding of the project of rational autonomy we have analyzed here. My approach therefore is necessarily selective, aiming to isolate what is critical and potentially damaging to the rational ideal of a culture of enlightenment. For it is only by engaging with the apparent rejection of this project that we can hope to establish its continued relevance to contemporary social and political life.

2. Adorno and Horkheimer on Enlightened Thought

"We are wholly convinced . . . that social freedom is inseparable from enlightened thought."[3] Thus Adorno and Horkheimer introduce their *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. However, instead of presenting a defense of the "enlightenment project," they proceed to offer a highly critical account both of the historical Enlightenment and of the aspirations of enlightened thought. On their account, enlightenment brings neither freedom nor knowledge. "Enlightenment," they claim, "is totalitarian"

and readily transformed into "wholesale deception of the masses."[4] How can we explain this self-confessed *petitio principii*? We can begin by looking at what motivates their criticism of enlightenment. Central to their argument is the idea that its emancipatory potential notwithstanding, enlightened thinking "emerges from its critical element to become a means at the disposal of an existing order," with the result that enlightenment turns into something "negative and destructive."[5] The avowed aim of their investigation into this process of transformation of enlightened thinking—"the self-destruction of Enlightenment"[6]—is to *preserve* its critical potential and, indeed, to prepare "the way for a positive notion of enlightenment which will release it from entanglement in blind domination."[7] The project of criticism of enlightenment is presented in terms that deliberately echo the Kantian project of a critique of reason. Adorno and Horkheimer argue that "enlightenment must examine itself" because only when its complicity with the "present collapse of bourgeois civilisation" is fully understood, will its emancipatory promise become fulfilled.[8] At the same time, they do not view this fulfilment in terms of a new utopia. On the contrary, they equate the realization of the emancipatory potential of critical thinking with heightened awareness of the tainted nature of our best efforts to achieve freedom and of the powerlessness of the "tendencies toward true humanism" in the main course of history.[9]

The urgency with which Adorno and Horkheimer undertake their criticism bespeaks the historical context of the composition of the book. *Dialectic of Enlightenment* was written in the United States, where the authors fled into exile after the rise of National Socialism, and published in Amsterdam in 1947, with the addition of a final section entitled "Elements of Anti-Semitism." The book bears thus the explicit marks of a historical consciousness at a point of crisis, reflecting the massive upheavals and the violent social and political conflicts of the time in which it was written. History, however, does not simply provide the context of the argument. Rather, the book itself is structured around a *philosophical-historical* thesis. The task Adorno and Horkheimer set themselves is to discover "why mankind, instead of entering into a truly human condition, is sinking into a new kind of barbarism."[10] While the historical horizon of the Nazi terror adds urgency to this task, the diagnosis underpinning it has a much wider reach and scope. This is already apparent in the declaration contained in the 1969 preface, in which the authors assert that while they would not maintain without qualification every statement in the book, their analysis continues to be relevant. This is partly, they claim, because their account of the spread of unfreedom fits as much the historical

conditions of the present, the "conflicts in the Third World and the renewed growth of totalitarianism," as it did of the rise of Fascism.[11]

There is, however, a further philosophical commitment that justifies Adorno and Horkheimer's claim for the continuing relevance of their argument. This stems from their very conception of critical thinking in terms of resistance to the oversimplifications of dogma and the treacherous blandness of accepted pieties. In a later essay, Horkheimer argues that the real task of philosophy is to criticize "what is prevalent"[12] in order to expose the onesided nature of current ideas that reflect the "chaotic growth of individual elements of social life" that destroys "mankind as a whole."[13] A philosophy that is genuinely critical must at once seek to think the "whole" or the "unconditioned," while at the same time make explicit that any whole presented as such is deceptive.[14] Critical thinking is thus in its essence *ambitious* thinking: it seeks to encompass not only what given forms of thought conveniently or unwittingly exclude, but also its own impossibility, its failure to think the whole. This ambition shapes *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. It is reflected in the book's daunting historical span, from prehistoric societies to Hollywood in the 1940s, and its broad range of topics, from the myth of Odysseus to contemporary advertising. Most importantly though, the theoretical ambition of the book is revealed in its structure and central thesis. Insofar as it aims to provide a rationale for historical progress and to make history intelligible, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* can be seen to share the aims of philosophical history. The task of explanation, however, is subsummed under the purpose of criticism. The imperative of making sense of history issues from a philosophical commitment to critical thinking, which has as its aim to support freedom and redeem "true humanism," even if only by showing "lack of respect for all that is so firmly rooted in the general suffering."[15] This negative conception of true humanism flows from the central thesis of the book that all emancipatory endeavor, including thinking itself, is rooted in domination. The thesis is genuinely critical on Adorno and Horkheimer's criteria because it is both global in its application and self-referential. At the same time, and for the same reasons, the thesis is not historically specific; it is ahistorical or, perhaps, transhistorical. It turns out then, that the historical analysis of certain strands of Western thought and of particular social and political phenomena provides material for a thesis that is ultimately beyond the reach of historical verification. I will be arguing that this unacknowledged slip between historical particularity and transhistorical generality affects directly the philosophical claims made in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and opens the way for challenging them.

At the heart of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* is the provocative and disconcerting claim that with the gradual realization of the program of the historical Enlightenment, "enlightenment reverts to mythology."[16] The provocation resides in the fact that enlightenment is supposed to consist precisely in "the *dissolution* of myths and the substitution of knowledge for fancy."[17] The unsettling effect is intentional and intrinsic to the dialectical form of the statement, in which opposites are conjoined for the purpose of forcing a rethinking of their respective significance. Accordingly, the claim that the more successful it becomes, the more enlightenment reverts to myth is intended as a criticism of the historical self-understanding of enlightenment as a process that emancipates mankind from superstition. Following the historical thread of scientific enlightenment, Adorno and Horkheimer interpret emancipation in terms of the capacity to control the fear of nature that lies at the origin of superstitious practices and beliefs. Success is measured by the ability to understand, predict, and control natural processes. If one is prepared to acknowledge the potency and efficacy of prescientific ways of controlling the natural environment, however, by this very measure of success, myth is "*already* enlightenment."[18] That mythical ways of thinking reflect recognizably rational concerns articulates one part only of the dialectic of enlightenment. The other part contains the more uncomfortable claim that enlightenment itself *reverts* to myth. "Myth" here stands for a way of relating to the natural world that keeps human beings hostage to irrational forces. Enlightenment, the authors insist, has its own mythical content in the oppressive rational structures with which it replaces the mythical ones. We are confronted here with a new contradiction: enlightenment, which is already claimed to be inseparable from social freedom, is now described as oppressive and its rationality is deemed irrational.

How are we to understand the claim that enlightenment reverts to myth? The crucial point of reference here is Max Weber's diagnosis of modernity. Adorno and Horkheimer seek to foreground a certain symmetry between the primordial powers of destruction that hold sway in mythic ritual and the impersonal processes of domination that are set in course by the historical Enlightenment. Appropriating Weber's view of the modern world as an "iron cage,"[19] they argue that the loss of freedom suffered by the modern individual is a consequence of the very processes of rationalization that were supposed to bring about his liberation. That modern life brings with it a *decrease* of freedom is in need of some explaining. What holds the key to this diagnosis is the concept of the "rationalization" of modern life. The term is adopted from Weber and used to describe modern systems of administration and of bureau-

cracy through which individuals are processed. Adorno and Horkheimer describe a world in which these processes of rationalization encroach ever more effectively upon the social domain and permeate every aspect of human life. Even "free time" is not free, but dedicated to the consumption of products, such as films, radio, or magazines that replicate the "rhythm of the iron system."[20] As a result, the authors argue, culture becomes a "common denominator" that contains "in embryo that schematization and a process of cataloguing and classification which bring culture within the sphere of administration."[21] This picture of a social world run by administrative systems, and of a culture that replicates the logic of administration, represents a clear reversal of the Enlightenment ideal of culture and of sociability and a betrayal of the ethical and emancipatory hopes attached to this ideal.

The claim that enlightenment reverts to myth, however, is not simply a thesis about the historical Enlightenment and the fate of its aspirations. Adorno and Horkheimer's more radical claim is that there is a self-destructive kernel within "all civilising rationality," which then becomes the "germ cell of a proliferating mythic irrationality" and consists in the "denial of nature in man for the sake of domination over non-human nature and over other men."[22] Every gain in terms of emancipation, social progress, or material well-being is paid for by a denial of nature that bespeaks not freedom but enslavement. Although it intensifies with the scientific aspirations of the historical Enlightenment and with the onset of modern processes of rationalization, the denial of inner nature remains the hidden element of all human endeavor that aims to social freedom, happiness, or progress. Given this diagnosis, enlightenment becomes, as Albrecht Wellmer points out, a "world-historical project of the human species, in which the species simultaneously creates itself and threatens its own destruction."[23] The claim that enlightenment reverts to myth means thus both that the increasingly perfected processes of technical control of nature become themselves threatening—because they are as uncontrollable as the irrational forces they were designed to control—and that domination of nature becomes domination of man. While the first part of the claim is attached to specific historical phenomena, the latter part applies to the history of the human species as such. It is this latter claim that provides the central thesis of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*—namely, that it is precisely those dimensions of human activity that contain a potential for *resistance* to domination that are rooted in domination.

The thesis that concerns me here is that there is a kernel of unfreedom within all emancipatory endeavor. This means that *any* emancipatory project carries within it its own measure of subjugation.

The problem with this thesis is that it runs the risk of forfeiting Adorno and Horkheimer's claims for historical relevance. Although analysis of particular historical phenomena provides support for it, the thesis is clearly not designed to meet the demands of historical analysis but rather those of critical thinking. What we have here is an account of human history as it *ought* to be interpreted, if the emancipatory, humanist hope is not to be lost. Since, however, this emancipatory, humanist hope resides exclusively in the effort to think critically—that is, it is given no further positive content—this is an account of human history interpreted so as to fulfill the conditions for the possibility of critical thinking. Unsurprisingly then, given the self-referential structure of the project, the thesis that emerges out of this historical analysis is historically nonspecific and, as it appears from the 1969 preface, seemingly adaptable to each and every historical circumstance. Adorno and Horkheimer's initial claim that truth has a historical core appears now as providing an inoculation *against* acknowledging historical change. This creates a problem when change *is* acknowledged, as when the authors note that critical thought continues "even in the face of progress."[24] In this instance, the reader is given no means for judging what might count as progress and has to take it on trust that Adorno and Horkheimer, even while they refuse to articulate them, have nonetheless criteria for deciding what counts as "residues of freedom" and as "true humanism."[25] It could be that criteria are unnecessary, that one just knows what true freedom is when one sees it. But this runs counter to the whole tenor of the argument, which aims to show that what looks like freedom is in fact rooted in domination and self-inflicted suffering. On the other hand, the idea that the authors know best falls foul of the notion of critical thinking they seek to defend. It seems then that we need some way of recognizing the positive notion of enlightenment, which Adorno and Horkheimer clearly use as a regulative ideal, but fail to communicate. I will argue that it is possible to identify the features of nonoppressive rationality and free social interaction *within* their criticism of enlightenment. While doing so denies the totalizing reach of their central thesis, I will argue that it remains consistent with their critical intentions. Most importantly for our present purposes, it allows us to entertain a positive notion of enlightenment without committing the dogmatic impertinence of simply rejecting the resources of critical thinking that Adorno and Horkheimer put to our disposal.

How are we then to read *Dialectic of Enlightenment* critically? We can begin by seeking to clarify what exactly enlightenment is, on Adorno and Horkheimer's account. First of all, the social and political

agenda of the historical Enlightenment makes "enlightenment" a useful placeholder for emancipatory hopes and aspirations in general; this is evident in the author's initial claim that enlightened thought is inseparable from social freedom and their avowed aim to pave the way for a positive notion of enlightenment. However, this aspect of Enlightenment thinking remains absent from Adorno and Horkheimer's reconstruction of the dialectic of enlightenment. Instead, they focus their analysis on the strand of Enlightenment that identifies human well-being with the scientific endeavor to control the natural world. They argue that as a result of the success of science as a tool that enables human beings to pursue the goal of self-preservation with a new and unparalleled degree of efficiency, the dominant conception of reason becomes itself instrumental. This is a form of rationality that subserves the criterion of efficacy and is limited to calculation of how pregiven goals can be successfully achieved. The pursuit of increased efficiency thus creates a "disenchanted" world, not only in the sense of a world shorn of mythical and religious meaning, but also that of a world in which no source of ultimate reasons for action is, or can be, recognized as authoritative. Adorno and Horkheimer describe instrumental rationality as a "dissolving rationality,"[26] which cannot replace what it dissolves because it cannot be used for making rational decisions about final ends. As a result, the rationality of goals such as social freedom appears questionable and the domination of nature, which is seen as the means for achieving such goals, is transformed to an end in itself. This double assault on the social and moral goals, their expulsion from the domain of reason and their translation into domination of nature, is not exclusive to the historical Enlightenment. It attests humanity's antagonistic and ultimately self-destructive relation to nature. Although this antagonism originates in the struggle for survival, Adorno and Horkheimer argue that it is ultimately self-destructive. Emancipation from nature is underpinned by a logic of universal exchange that conceals a hostility toward everything that is peculiar, particular, or different. This logic triumphs with instrumental rationality, which treats its objects with utter indifference:

> Every attempt to break the natural thralldom, because nature is broken, enters all the more deeply into the natural enslavement.... Abstraction, the tool of enlightenment, treats its objects as did fate, the notion of which it rejects: it liquidates them.[27]

Here, Adorno and Horkheimer's diagnosis comes full circle: enlightenment becomes devoid of social significance, it stands simply for domination and its claims to social freedom become mythical.

What is striking about Adorno and Horkheimer's analysis of enlightenment is the absence of engagement with the practical, public, and critical dimensions of enlightenment thought, which are nonetheless essential to their diagnosis. Their uncovering of the hidden affinities between myth and enlightenment depends on presenting *both* myth and enlightenment as having a similar purpose, namely, to dominate nature. At the same time, as we have just seen, they invoke throughout the enlightened social and political agenda. This is part of a deliberate strategy. Adorno and Horkheimer do not deny that a different conception of reason is possible; they acknowledge, for instance, that in Kant's philosophy "reason comprises the idea of a free, human social life."[28] Rather, they insist that such alternative conceptions are *ultimately* reducible to calculative and instrumental reasoning. Kant's moral philosophy becomes paradigmatic of this process of reduction because once rational autonomy is identified with the demand for self-mastery, practical reason succumbs to the instrumental demand for the efficient control of inner nature. Nonetheless, Adorno and Horkheimer frame their diagnosis in emphatically normative terms, insisting that reason ought to be more than instrumental. The closest they come to outlining their positive notion of enlightenment and of humanism is in their description of the utopian element of Kant's conception of reason in terms of a "humanity which, itself no longer distorted, has no further need to distort."[29] Since the key claim of their thesis is that enlightenment rationality annihilates particularity, one way of fleshing out the "ought" that Adorno and Horkheimer issue is by seeking out a model of reasoning that forms a genuine alternative to the destructive model of instrumentality.

The model of public reasoning I have defended in this book provides us with such an alternative. Public reasoning is structured on the dual axis of particularity and universality; it depends on and articulates an *essential* dynamic between the two poles. The demand for communication shows this clearly. While it describes reasoning on universalizable principles, public reasoning is crucially dependent on the particular voice of the individual who makes her own views public. Conversely, the claims to universalizability raised at any time by an individual who seeks to address a universal audience are submitted to the test of actual communication, that is, communication that allows *other* particular voices to be heard. The communicative *agon* of public reasoning differs substantially and systematically from the implacable anonymity of the logic of universal exchange that Adorno and Horkheimer identify with the mythical content of enlightenment. Reading *Dialectic of Enlightenment* critically opens the way for articu-

lating a positive conception of enlightenment that is not premised on the destruction of the particular and, hence, it is not by necessity totalitarian, deceptive, or complicit with domination. Put differently: one way of taking seriously the central thesis of the book is by offering a defense of the freedom to make public use of one's reason, a defense of precisely that domain of critical reflection which Horkheimer and Adorno see as threatened by the onslaught of instrumental rationality.

3. Foucault on the Origin of Norms

A potentially damaging argument against the social and cultural project I have presented in this book comes from Foucault's analysis of penal institutions in *Discipline and Punish*. Although ostensibly value-neutral, his discussion of penal systems and of their function within different "economies of power" succeeds in raising important questions about the purpose of the norms embodied in a range of modern practices and about the meaning of normative concepts used in justifying those norms. Foucault achieves this by drawing a series of suggestive links between the power relations that the modern penal system subserves and concepts such as "justice" and "humanity." The passage from torture to prison, he argues, has been "too readily" and "too emphatically" attributed to a process of "humanisation."[30] On Foucault's account, this passage is best seen as an adaptive response to changing social, political, and economic conditions that created new demands no longer served by the use of torture. This claim, in turn, introduces a much stronger claim that "there remains . . . a trace of "torture" in the modern mechanism of criminal justice—a trace that has not been entirely overcome, but which is enveloped, increasingly, by the noncorporeal nature of the penal system."[31] Foucault seeks to make this "trace of 'torture'" visible and vivid and, in the process, question not only modern practices of punishment but also the assumptions behind the reforming ideas that are supposed to have inspired them.

To open up a new perspective on modern ideas about punishment, Foucault adopts a theoretical approach that prioritizes "power" over "meaning." In his explanation of the rationale of penal practices and ideas about punishment, he deliberately subordinates the theoretical apparatus invoked to make sense and justify them to the relations of power these practices and ideas subserve.[32] These relations of power are then studied as they are made manifest in a manifold of ways on the human body, which is tortured, confined, observed. Because power is shown to assume a multiplicity of forms, the naturalistic reduction of

claims to meaning into relations of power yields no new metalanguage with which to interpret various phenomena. This is something that Foucault welcomes, arguing that the abandonment of the language of the "universal," the "exemplary," the "just and true for all" leads to a "much more immediate and concrete awareness of struggles."[33] As we shall see, this is not a straightforward rejection of the Enlightenment, but rather an attempt to continue in a socially and historically specific context the Kantian criticism of reason. I will argue that Foucault's criticism of reason is not well served by his employment of the concept of power.

The full title of Foucault's study of the development of penal institutions is *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. His choice of subject matter and approach reflect concerns that can already be found in his earlier works, *Madness and Civilisation* and *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archeology of Medical Perception*, in which he traces the emergence of institutions such as the workhouse, the mental hospital, and the clinic. Examining social history through the lens of poverty, madness, and illness, Foucault describes the gradual development and consolidation of the administrative apparatuses of modern industrial democracies. To that extent, Foucault's work shares with that of Horkheimer and Adorno a concern with the genesis of social structures and of the particular forms of knowledge that are characteristic of modern societies. His approach and aims, however, are significantly different. In contrast to Horkheimer and Adorno, who adopt a strongly normative stance, Foucault presents his work as a form of history.[34] His stated aim is to understand and to make intelligible, rather than to judge. In *The Birth of the Clinic*, for example, he insists that he did not write the book "in favour of one kind of medicine as against another, or against medicine and in favour of the absence of medicine."[35] In later works he describes his approach as a "genealogy," a concept he adopts from Nietzsche, explaining that it is a study of the past that "tries to restore the conditions of appearance of a singularity from multiple determining elements, of which it would appear . . . as the effect."[36] This concern with investigating the multiple descent of particular phenomena goes hand in hand with a rejection of "the metahistorical deployment of ideal significations and indefinite teleologies."[37] Foucault's history presents us with a different challenge to that of critical thinking, for it places a magnifying glass on the manifold contingencies that flesh out our emancipatory ideals and, indeed, shape our attachments to those ideals.

Foucault's rejection of historical metanarratives does not turn his genealogical history into a merely positivist collection of facts. His

treatment of historical material is highly selective. Although the topic of *Discipline and Punish* is penal practices and penal institutions in France from the *ancien régime* through to mid-nineteenth century, the book contains no analysis of notorious institutions such as the Bastille or Vincennes.[38] We get a better idea about the content of the book by heeding Foucault's own description of it as "a chapter in the history of 'punitive reason.'"[39] This suggests that he is as much concerned with charting different *concepts* of punishment as he is with documenting the rules and practices that governed different institutions during a discrete historical period. His guiding question is how it is that we have come to regard prevalent social norms *as* normal and the reasons that underpin them *as* rational. His reluctance then to pass judgment on the practices he describes expresses a deeper skepticism about the criteria that might be used in any such evaluation. As he declares in *Discipline and Punish*, he does not wish to write "a history of the past in terms of the present," but rather the "history *of* the present."[40] This, he explains in a later interview, is to be understood as an attempt to "identify the accidents, the minute deviations, [and] the errors,...that gave birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us."[41] From this perspective, Foucault's tactically partial and selective history can be viewed as a kind of critique, which, on his account, is "an instrument for those who fight, for those who resist and refuse what is."[42] By seeking to identify the "accidents" and "minute deviations" that constitute "what is," Foucault mounts a challenge to the sense of inevitability or necessity bound up with current judicial and penal norms and, indirectly, to the normativity of those norms and the hold they exercise on current practices. What makes this project especially interesting in the present context is that it has clear affinities with critical projects we examined in chapter one, while at the same time treading very lightly on criterial questions that were central to the eighteenth-century critics.

Foucault's genealogical history can be seen to reflect the kind of concerns that are shared by a whole cluster of contemporary philosophical projects, which are equally suspicious of the language of the universal, the exemplary, the just and true for all. Rorty, for instance, argues that we should view ourselves, our language, our morality, our "highest hopes" as "contingent products," as "literalizations of what once were accidentally produced metaphors" and let go the stubborn belief "in an order beyond time and change which both determines the point of human existence and establishes the hierarchy of responsibilities."[43] In a similar vein, MacIntyre argues that we should treat our ideas about the good provisionally and fallibilistically, keeping in mind that what we come to view as *the* good life is only the "best...so far."[44] What

distinguishes Foucault's work from this broad move toward the relativization of our ideas about the right and the good is his further reduction of theoretical claims into power relations. His analysis of the contingent, impermanent character of beliefs and ideas that have become central to our modern self-conception feeds directly into his analysis of power. Showing that the ideas we use to justify our practices have a historical index is the first step to a more radical claim that these ideas are mere epiphenomena of changing configurations of power. The most significant implication of this claim is that ideas cannot be judged on their own terms, within the language of reasons, because this whole theoretical apparatus is just the discursive outgrowth of what is fundamentally nondiscursive. It does not even make sense to think of ideas as revisable; they are only changeable. The identification of the contingent origin of what comes to be viewed as normal or natural is therefore put to the service of a theory of power that seeks to undermine the very domain of discourse it inhabits. This can be seen to be of a piece with Foucault's politics of resistance to all "ideal significations," including those he employs in his own work. Yet as I shall argue now a central aspect of this strategy of theoretical resistance owes little to the deployment of the concept of power.

The opening pages of *Discipline and Punish* offer a striking introduction to the book's principal theme. A gruesome account of the torture and execution of the failed regicide Damiens, who was condemned in 1757 to make an *amende honorable*, is put side by side to Léon Faucher's grimly detailed timetable for the "House of Young Prisoners in Paris" of 1838.[45] This juxtaposition sets the chronological boundaries of Foucault's study and also serves to illustrate its aims: to reveal the hidden order in the seeming chaos of the public execution and the hidden violence of the prison. To achieve the first aim and show torture is a not an inexplicable phenomenon, an expression of "lawless rage," Foucault undertakes to show how it fits into a particular "economy of power."[46] He argues that the *amende honorable* exacted on the body of Damiens is a manifestation of the king's absolute power and of a judicial and political system designed to preserve and reassert that power when it is challenged. It is precisely the account of power that Foucault introduces to explain the rationale of public torture that makes this obsolete penal system part of a history of the *present*. By slotting penal practices within a framework of power relations he both invites his readers to recognize the logic of what looks like pure savagery and to reconsider the rationale for penal reform. The account of the power of the king has a proleptic function, paving the way for the argument that penal reform has little to do with ideas of justice and lenience and more

with a changing landscape of power relations: once the power of the king faded and the priorities of the judicial system changed, torture and public execution fell out of practice. Foucault seeks to make the evolution of penal practices intelligible by looking beyond the reasons invoked by penal reformers and into the possible causes that made reform necessary. He locates the "birth of the prison" outside the terms of reference of the eighteenth-century discourse, which appeals to normative concepts such as humanity and justice, prioritizing instead the various social and economic contingencies that alter the power to punish. He points out, for instance, that the emergence of different economic and social patterns during the eighteenth century changed the nature of the crimes committed; there was a shift from a "criminality of blood" to a "criminality of fraud" with which the old legal system was simply unable to cope.[47] Faced with the challenge to find a "new economy and a new technology of the power to punish"[48] jurists and lawgivers responded by advocating the expansion of detention as a form of punishment. By locating the emergence of new penal practices within a complex mechanism that includes economic, social, and cultural facts, Foucault interprets reform as a kind of adaptation and adjustment of the "mechanisms of power." While he does not dispute that particular practices may "find their justification in morality," he insists that they are not in any sense the product *of* moral choices.[49] From this perspective, the appeals of the penal reformers to ideas such as humanity or justice appear idle, mere ex post facto justifications. What seems to be an argument about how people ought to be treated, turns out to be a recommendation about how best to deal with people under particular circumstances.

Foucault's reductive move, the argument that meaning subserves power, has limited scope however: it merely apportions different rationales to different penal practices. It is an argument about how sets of practices shape and are shaped by power relations. The more radical claim that modern methods of punishment contain hidden violence, indeed, a "trace of 'torture,'" depends on a further argument concerning modern configurations of power, to which Foucault attributes the objective of achieving efficient control over individuals. This pursuit, he claims, generates a number of institutions with a disciplinary character, such as schools, factories, barracks, and also institutions of learning. These prisonlike disciplinary institutions implement modern mechanisms of "normalization" so that "out of a formless clay . . . the machine required can be constructed."[50] Prisons, which mete out homogeneous and reliable punishment, become the paradigmatic institutions of a society ruled by the demand for efficient control. It is with

this account of a "carceral" society that Foucault finally redeems his initial claim about the hidden violence of modern prisons. With the onset of carceral society, punishment disappears from public view. But this does not mean that violence disappears. Rather modern "justice no longer takes public responsibility for the violence that is bound up with its practice."[51] By exposing the violence of a whole family of institutions of which prison is just the most eminent member Foucault issues a new challenge to the discourse of the enlightened reformers. He claims that the true aim of penal reform is not "to establish a new right to punish on more equitable principles," but rather to make the power to punish "more effective,"[52] and thus subserve the objective of disciplinary efficiency. It is not therefore the case that humanity, lenience, and justice are idle, rather they are actively misleading: humanity is simply the "respectable name given to this economy and to its meticulous calculations."[53]

There is an equivocation built into Foucault's alternative history of the development of penal practices. His diagnosis of the origins of the modern disciplinary individual and of the carceral society sustains a radical interrogation of enlightened normative discourse. However, this interrogation depends on two mutually incompatible lines of argument. The first aims to reduce meaning to power, showing that all normative concepts such as humanity, leniency, and justice are subservient to power relations. The purpose of this argument is to show that it is not the ideas that justify the practices, but rather the demands placed on the judicial system by a complex set of factors. This is a familiar type of argument, a version of which we encountered in Schiller's claim that in the absence of an accompanying desire reason cannot be motivating. The second line of argument aims to establish something quite different, namely, that there is at least *one* normative concept, discipline, or perhaps efficiency, which a *particular* power economy, the modern one, subserves. The claim here is that some normative concepts such as humanity, leniency, and justice serve to conceal, or are disguises for, a different normative concept, which is the one that truly determines the modern mechanisms of power. This argument is much more closely related to Adorno and Horkheimer's claim that enlightenment is deceptive and ruled by a rationality that oppresses rather than liberates. I will show now that it is this latter argument that carries the weight of Foucault's analysis of "punitive reason."

The importance of the second line of argument in Foucault's analysis is made especially clear in his discussion of Bentham's panopticon. The panopticon was a proposal for a reformatory built around a central tower of observation from which it is possible to keep the pris-

oners in constant surveillance. Although Bentham's proposal was turned down, the panopticon, which means, literally, the "all-seeing" is accorded paradigmatic status in Foucault's narrative for being "the diagram of a mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form."[54] What sort of ideal does the panopticon embody? As a model of centralized efficiency, it represents the impersonal exercise of power of modern institutions. At the same time, because it functions through observation, it makes explicit the modern twinning of knowledge and discipline. But, above all, the panopticon represents a perfection of *means*: it is an ideal of sheer efficiency that can be "detached from any specific use."[55] It embodies an ideal of discipline as mechanism: "a functional mechanism that must improve the exercise of power by making it lighter, more rapid, more effective, a design of subtle coercion for a society to come."[56] This design becomes a prototype for the carceral network of normalizing power in which Foucault locates modern penal practices. It is by viewing power relations through the "ideal schema of discipline"[57] that he is able to open up for us the perspective of generalized coercion of modern society and to draw the disturbing parallels between the concern with justice and the interest in accumulating knowledge, on the one hand, and coercive practices on the other.

The structural equivocation of Foucault's analysis opens up a kind of debate that exceeds the stated concerns of his genealogical-historical study and shows the limits of the subordination of meaning to power. Foucault begins his history of penal reform by claiming that questions of moral justification are parasitic upon practices that are best understood when placed within a complex causal nexus of phenomena. He then further deciphers these phenomena by appealing to ideas of disciplinary efficiency and functionality. The key claim of *Discipline and Punish* then turns out to be about meaning and not about power: it is the claim that the meaning of humanity is reducible to the meaning of discipline or of efficiency. This claim, however, goes beyond the self-imposed limits of the causal-genealogical account Foucault sets out to give, for it is not a claim about origins but one about normative commitments.

Unlike the reduction of meaning to power, the reduction of the meaning of one term to that of another reveals a lack of fit between one type of discourse, that of respect for individuals, and another in which individuals are the "object-effect" of mechanisms of "normalization."[58] This strand of Foucault's analysis can serve as a prelude for a critical investigation into the normative content of terms we use and into the substantive commitments we make in using them. It is significant, in that respect, that in his later work, Foucault seeks to inscribe his

genealogical investigations within the philosophical tradition of the critical enlightenment I have analyzed in this book.[59] Revealing here are the two questions he formulates to explain the terms of reference of his historico-philosophical studies. The first one is "*What* is this Reason that we use? What are its historical effects? What are its limits and what are its dangers?" The second is "What is *Aufklärung*?"[60] In treating these questions, Foucault acknowledges the regulative force of the Kantian idea of self-critical reason and even of that of mature adulthood, but stops short of investigating the kind of "ought" contained in these concepts. As a result, these ideas remain nebulous, becoming assimilated into critical *attitudes*.[61] By reducing critique into an intellectual attitude, however, Foucault effectively closes off the debate about criticism and enlightenment he seems keen to revisit by going "back to Kant."[62] Central to such a debate must be an account of the reflective examination of our intellectual commitments and not just the assumption of a critical attitude. Perhaps the courage of *sapere aude* is also about giving such an account while knowing full well that it is not unassailable (and in fact, if it is rational, as we have argued so far, it *must* be assailable by criticism). The kind of reflective examination I am suggesting is required, if we are to see ourselves as critics, cannot take place without a proper engagement with the normative questions that are consistently elided in Foucault's work. These are questions about what it means to think critically, what critical thinking entails, and what conditions it requires. Kant's account of public reasoning offers us a propitious starting point, at least, for posing these questions.

4. Gilligan on Mature Adulthood

The last set of substantive issues I want to discuss is raised in feminist moral theory and concerns the reevaluation of the role of affective attachments in moral deliberation and decision making. I will be focusing on Carole Gilligan's study in cognitive psychology entitled *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Dependence*.[63] As it will soon become clear, there is very little in this work that directly refers to enlightenment or its legacy. And yet, Gilligan's account of the limitations of maturity strikes at the heart of the universalistic underpinnings of the ideal of rational culture we have analyzed here. What she seeks to foreground is the role of context, the unreasoned, unchosen ties that shape our deliberations and actions. She seeks to make us recognize the value of these cumbersome but necessary attachments and the value of deliberations and actions that are colored by them. In her

introduction, Gilligan draws together the themes of the book by focusing on the 1973 Supreme Court decision to make abortion legally available. This decision, she argues, allowed a woman publicly "to speak for herself," to have the "deciding voice" in matters of life and death, and, at the same time, made women aware "of the strength of an internal voice which was interfering with their ability to speak."[64] *In a Different Voice* sets out to investigate this conflict, which is cast as a conflict between "compassion and autonomy, between virtue and power,"[65] and to show how it informs women's identity and moral choices. In the course of this investigation, Gilligan proposes a new theoretical framework for understanding the moral development of women in which importance is given to weighing the various commitments toward the people who are affected by one's moral deliberations. This becomes the basis of a distinctive "ethic of care,"[66] in which morality is seen "as a problem of inclusion rather than one of balancing claims."[67]

Gilligan deliberately sets the model of care against what she sees as a narrow and restrictive conception of morality based on "objective principles of justice" and "the formal logic of equality and reciprocity."[68] She argues that judging moral maturity on formal and deontological criteria is unfair to women because women tend to adopt a different mode of moral deliberation. Failure to recognize this means that women are judged to be morally immature. The aim of Gilligan's argument, however, is not simply to show that our criteria for judging moral maturity must change in order to recognize and accommodate a greater variety of moral responses. Centrally, Gilligan seeks to defend the *value* of a care-based ethical response that shows sensitivity to the particularities of the ethical situation. Although there are many affinities between the ethic of care she describes in her book and contemporary particularistic ethics, what makes her model distinctive is its emphasis on the role of the affective ties of the moral agent in shaping her moral identity and responses. The capacity for emotional attachments is central to the ethic of care because they are seen to encourage characteristically other-directed patterns of moral deliberation. Gilligan repeatedly emphasizes the concern for others shown by the women she interviews in the course of her study, a concern that often takes priority over considerations of the women's own self-fulfilment.[69]

In terms of different approaches to ethics, as opposed to different models of moral development, Gilligan seeks to draw a contrast between an ethic that centers around notions of self-determination and personal responsibility and one that centers around notions of duties toward others and of being responsible *for* others. The distinction between principle-based formalism and context-bound particularism is

shown to be a consequence of this basic contrast. Although Gilligan makes clear that she considers the ethic of care superior to ethic of rights (or ethic of justice), the conception of moral maturity she outlines retains elements of both, representing a fusion of the two perspectives, or at least a recognition of "both points of view" that leads to "a greater convergence in judgement."[70] Therefore, recognizing the value of the ethic of care is a first step in a process of reassessment of our ethical commitments and of revision of our conception of maturity. I will be arguing that the conception of maturity put forward by Gilligan is unconvincing. However, in the course of her defense of this conception, she makes a number of important points that can help clarify key features of the conception of rational autonomy I have been defending here.

The immediate target of *In a Different Voice* is the procedures of Lawrence Kohlberg, who pioneered empirical research in moral developmental psychology. Kohlberg's studies broke new ground, directly challenging the assumption that psychologists and social scientists must assume a value-neutral or relativist perspective. As Gilligan notes, Kohlberg's research is marked by a growing awareness within a post-Holocaust historical horizon that the hands-off stance of the scientist can no longer be viewed as innocent, but rather amounts to a "kind of complicity."[71] Kohlberg sought to measure moral development in adolescence by devising a series of moral dilemmas to which he then matched the responses of children on a scale of moral development, measuring one to six. The sixth stage, equated with moral maturity, corresponds to a fully developed principled conception of justice underpinned by a reflective understanding of human rights. When Kohlberg conducted mixed-sex experiments he found that girls scored consistently low on the scale, suggesting an incapacity to achieve full moral maturity. An illustration of the contrasting reactions of boys and girls is given by reference to Jake and Amy, two eleven-year-olds from comparable backgrounds who respond differently to constructed moral dilemmas. They are presented with a hypothetical case of a man, Heinz, who is too poor to buy an overpriced drug for his dying wife. The question is Should Heinz steal the drug? Jake grasps immediately that the case illustrates a conflict between property and life. Noting that "laws have mistakes," he asserts that "human life is worth more than money" and that Heinz would be justified in stealing the drug. Amy, by contrast, insists that stealing is wrong but is clearly uncomfortable with the dilemma. She responds by asking more information about the people involved in this hypothetical situation. By Kohlberg's criteria, she appears less mature than Jake. Gilligan, however, takes Amy's indeci-

sion as recognition of a problem that takes the form not of a conflict between life and property but of a "fracture of human relationship."[72] She points out that although Kohlberg's theory provides a ready response to the question, What does he see that she does not? it has nothing to say to the question "What does *she* see that he does not?[73] To answer to this latter question, Gilligan argues, we need to become aware and learn to value a model of moral deliberation in which relational attachments play a key role; in short, we must learn to recognize the different kinds of moral imperatives of an ethic of care.

Within Gilligan's study of moral development, the model of care has a clear explanatory purpose and value, because it allows for the recognition of a distinctive moral perspective that had previously been ignored, which emerges out of women's experience and thus helps articulate their own *different* voice. By providing a new theoretical framework for interpreting the observational data of Kohlberg's research, Gilligan is able to challenge Kohlberg's findings about the moral development of girls and at the same time question accepted scientific practices. She points out that Kohlberg's original experiment to establish the capacity of the theory to account for different stages in moral development did not in fact include any women.[74] This, she argues, is typical of a more widespread practice in which basic concepts in psychology are developed with women in absentia.[75] As a result, what is interpreted as an inadequacy in women's responses may in fact be an inadequacy of the theoretical framework by which women are judged, so that a problem in theory is subsequently "cast as a problem in women's development."[76]

That putatively gender-neutral theories are gender biased and that their application further exacerbates this bias is a key feminist theme. A number of feminist political philosophers, for instance, have argued in order to count as equal partners in the political and social life, women are encouraged to submit to a process of "homogenization."[77] Feminist investigation of the liberal political tradition has shown that ostensibly genderless conceptions of political agency reflect experiences of political involvement that were traditionally the preserve of men.[78] At the same time, women's experiences, as mothers for instance, not only fail to impinge upon models of citizenship, but work to women's disadvantage, as the identification of women with nature becomes the ground for denying them full rights of participation in the political domain.[79] The social role of women as carers is thus turned to their disadvantage and is used to form a particular conception of women's agency as essentially passive, as a nonagency in fact.[80] In the light of this broader debate, Gilligan's attempt "to restore the missing text of women's

development" and to recognize "not only what is missing . . . but also what is there"[81] is doubly important. First, by providing a model that accounts for the different patterns of moral development in girls and boys, she is able to show how this difference, though subtly enforced through gendered behavioral models, is not acknowledged, with the result that women are viewed as morally backward when compared to men. Secondly, however, she asks her readers to recognize the legitimacy of a paradigm that has long been used to judge women and which women use to judge themselves, namely, "in terms of their ability to care."[82]

How are we to judge the success of the second part of Gilligan's project? In other words, does the ethic of care provide us with a genuine alternative to the ethic of justice? A large part of Gilligan's argument is based on her interpretation of accounts given by women interviewees who discuss their stance on particular moral dilemmas. These data, however, are ambiguous. Often, what she interprets as recognition of the complexity of moral situations and of the fallibility of our moral judgments appears to be simply a reluctance to judge. Characteristic here is the insistence of one of her interviewees that "everybody's experience is so different that I kind of say to myself 'That might be something that I wouldn't do' but I can't say that it is right or wrong for that person." When asked about the applicability of her *own* "injunction against hurting," she replies "I can't say that it is wrong . . . I don't even think I use the words *right* and *wrong* anymore and I know I don't use the word *moral*, because I don't know what it means."[83] If this kind of moral befuddlement is a feature of the ethic of care, then it can hardly count on this model's favor. In this instance at least, the carer's sensitivity to the particular contexts in which moral problems arise leaves her without the resources to make any kind of moral judgment. Awareness of the complexity of moral situations and of the fallibility of our judgments cannot be, as Gilligan here suggests, equivalent with not making any. If indeed it produces only perplexity in the face of moral questions, then the model of care would have little to recommend it as a model of moral deliberation.

How about the specific commitments of the ethic of care? Here Gilligan offers a much richer account, using as a foil the ethic of justice. The latter is presented as inherently hostile to emotions and to affective ties, requiring an ability for separation and dissociation that results in a morality of "noninterference."[84] The practical reasoning required for adjudicating claims to justice is presented as a cold calculation of competing claims and the ideal of autonomy is seen to be complicit with a need for self-assertion and, indeed, contempt or fear of attachment. By

contrast, the ethic of care is portrayed as prioritizing duties, obligations, and responsibilities toward others. While affective attachments are key to the ethic of care, their precise role remains ambiguous. It is not clear, in other words, whether affective attachments are intended to be seen as determining the carer's moral responses or simply as sensitizing the carer to the needs and wants of others.[85] As a result, the proposed ideal of moral maturity, which is presented in terms of a fusion of justice and care, becomes vitiated. If care requires that moral responses be *determined* by commitments issuing from the carer's position in a web of relationships, then it is clearly irreconcilable with the justice model. One can strive to act either on the basis of one's familial or social roles, or in accordance with a universally valid principle. While we can be inconsistent in our adoption of the two models, sometimes acting on the former and at other times on the latter, it is difficult to see how we might do both at the same time. From this perspective then, Gilligan's conciliatory model of moral maturity appears more like a gesture of goodwill, rather than as a plausible ideal.

However, as she painstakingly traces the complex ways in which women internalize and adapt social ideals of femininity as they develop their moral identity, Gilligan also presents an alternative view of affective attachments, arguing that they have not a determining role, but rather a moralizing role in the path toward the achievement of full moral self-consciousness.[86] It would seem then that despite initial impressions, the ethic of care is not perfectly context bound, built upon nontransitive commitments and unmediated moral responses. Rather, as Gilligan explicitly states, the adoption of a care stance should be seen as the product of a long process of moral deliberation at the end of which "care becomes the self-chosen *principle*"[87] of moral judgment. In appears then that she finally agrees with Kohlberg in viewing the *reflective* adoption of a moral principle as one of the valued characteristics of moral maturity. On this reading, the ethic of care would appear already to fuse principle-based and context-based elements and thus to describe precisely Gilligan's ideal of moral maturity. Still, what is lacking is any account of the model of reflective practical reasoning that this ethic of care demands. What is lacking, in other words, is an account of how this *becomes* the "self-chosen principle" of moral judgment. We are not told how the unchosen and unreasoned attachments become—come to count as—reasons that justify moral choices. While she identifies the need for a reflective model of moral deliberation, Gilligan stops short of describing such a model. Nonetheless, two features emerge as central to it: Gilligan emphasizes throughout that deliberation must be convincingly other directed and that it must discourage the formulaic

application of abstract rules to particular cases. She reports that "Amy's phrase 'it depends' has been repeated by many women who also resist *formulaic* solutions to complex human problems,"[88] and rightly insists that there ought to be more to moral deliberation than simple subsumption of a particular case under a general rule.

I think that other-directedness and resistance to subsumptive and formulaic thinking are clearly desirable features of any account of rational deliberation that seeks to capture the notion of intellectual, if not also moral, maturity. In fact, central to the argument pursued so far is that we act on reasons and that to establish which reasons are the good ones, we undertake to reflect critically on the underlying principles to which we commit ourselves when we decide to act in a certain way. Because there are no pregiven rules, this process is inimical to the formulaic reasoning Gilligan criticizes.

How about Gilligan's worry that autonomy is simply a disguised form of selfishness? This is an important criticism that has antecedents in a tradition that goes back to Hamann and sees the emancipatory ideas of Enlightenment as a thin disguise for heroic self-aggrandisement.[89] Indeed, as we have seen, it is this moral concern that motivates much of the debate about the limits of enlightenment. Where does this leave us though with respect to Gilligan's specific point? As I have sought to show, critical reflection takes the form of seeking to structure our deliberation on universalizable principles. This means that my choice as an individual is guided by considerations of the universal validity of the principle to which I commit myself. These deliberations are not unchallengeable but are put to the test of actual discussion with others. The awareness of the fallibility of our judgments, which Gilligan values, is built into the other-directedness of the model of rational autonomy I have been defending here. Conversely, we could say that corresponding to the formal constraints that define the practical employment of our reason is a substantive concern with other agents. Furthermore, the substantive commitments that flow from this model do so precisely because of the reflexive character of the principles of public reasoning: the articulation of my own voice depends on the acknowledgment of principles of inclusion and participation that are binding for all. "My own" here does not mean that I stamp upon a brute world my preferred actions and opinions. Rather it means that I, as an individual agent or speaker, can *stand by* and take responsibility for my acts or words. Both the conception of maturity Gilligan urges and the conception of rational autonomy I have presented here then can be seen to describe a capacity for complex and inclusive thinking. The advantage of the model of rational autonomy over Gilligan's

model of maturity is that it further describes a specific practice of reasoning, making clear the sort of commitments, formal *and* substantive, that autonomy requires.

5. Culture within the Bounds of Reason

In *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, Kant somewhat resignedly complains that of late, the concept of enlightenment is being derided and misused (VI:57, *Religion*, 50). In the 1790s the whole complex of ideas, aspirations, and hopes bound up with the "project" of enlightenment were already falling out of fashion. Frederick Beiser attributes this to a paradigm shift that occurred in Germany after the French Revolution. He argues that many conservative critics of the revolution "doubted whether the common people are in a position to determine the right and wrong, the advantages and disadvantages, of laws, institutions, or policies" and, in doing so, began to question the "fundamental principle of the *Aufklärung* that individuals should think for themselves."[90] From such questioning, a new conception of the purpose and meaning of reason emerged that attributed an explanatory rather than a critical function to reason. In a sense this "new" conception was but a modification of scientific and naturalist strands of enlightenment itself and thus hardly new. It is indeed customary to view that portion of Western intellectual history in terms of an encounter between unbridled rationalism and modest naturalism of which the latter emerged victorious. This view is at best partial. What it leaves out is the complex articulation of a critical conception of reason that emerges out of a quite unique conjunction of social, political, and cultural concerns with the theoretical concerns about the nature of criticism and of free thinking. By making explicit this conjunction of concerns in my reconstruction of Kant's interpretation of enlightenment in terms of a culture of enlightenment, I have sought to show that critical enlightenment can be viewed as an open task, rather than simply as a fleeting historical moment.

Almost inevitably, the idea of a rational culture brings to mind obsolete ambitions to "ground thought or culture on an ahistorical matrix."[91] Even those who subscribe to some version of the modern project, as the inheritor of the Enlightenment project, are careful to limit reason to a modest reconstructive role. If there is an emancipatory legacy of the Enlightenment, we are told, then it must consist in a willing renunciation of the claim to be able to ground our practices on an elusive and unobtainable realm of rational norms. Freed from the

illusion that we need any such ethereal guarantee for our practices, we can concentrate instead on examining the actual norms and reasons that inhere in the concrete realm of practices, "the facts as we know them," the "shared fund of implicitly recognised basic ideas and principles," "existing social practices."[92] I believe, however, that casting our philosophical choices in this way is as misleading as casting the legacy of Enlightenment in terms of a contest between rationalism and naturalism. There is a way of reconstructing what Kant calls reason's "own peculiar sphere" (*CPR*, B 425) without submitting to the either/or of philosophical modesty and hubris. The starting point of this reconstruction is a different metaphor for reason: instead of seeking a foundation stone, we can look instead for a testing stone against which to assay our beliefs. This opens up a way of thinking about the reflective processes through which we test our beliefs and the commitments we undertake in doing so. In this way, we can envisage a rational culture that is not populated with automata that reason, but shaped by argument. Kant describes the overcoming of the autarkic stance of the logical egoist as a kind of *pluralism* (VII:130). In this context pluralism stands not just for manifoldness of views but for the inclusive character of reasoning. This in turn makes for a dynamic, agonistic, evolving culture. Just as the idea of a preestablished noumenal harmony is out of place, so is the idea of a common identity structured around ideas of basic and shared political goods. It is not accidental that all of Kant's examples are examples of public criticism. For what is at stake is the freedom to express publicly and cogently a point of view that is *different* from those which are assumed to be generally holding, or which are generally accepted.

How about the facts as we know them, the historical contingencies and circumstances that shape a culture? The idea of a culture of enlightenment is not free-floating but anchored in the various institutions and practices of debate that took on increasing prominence in the eighteenth century. Beyond the intellectual context of a philosophical debate about criticism, and about the nature and possibilities of enlightened reasoning, there is also the social and cultural context that includes philosophical salons and societies through to learned academies and the various journals through which ideas circulated and reached an ever-widening public. Central to my reconstruction of Kant's conception of a public use of reason is the idea that rational reflection can be *embedded* in practices and institutions without being in any sense reductively *local*. Indeed, I have sought to locate the possibility for such a project within Kant's own thought. By approaching Kant's philosophy from the perspective of its social and cultural commitments enables us to appreciate the extent to which functioning insti-

tutions and practices provide the concrete bases for his model of critical reflection. Though rooted in a particular society and a particular tradition, Kant's proposals regarding public argument cannot be viewed as restrictively internal to that society and tradition. The content of his argument is defined by an explicitly stated universalist commitment of inclusion and participation. Although he addresses the particular needs and interests of his contemporaries, which arise within a specific time and context, Kant seeks to show that their interest in their own enlightenment entails commitments that reach out beyond that time and context: to reason inclusively, to reason publicly, to communicate.

The social inflection which the idea of a culture of enlightenment gives to the self-critical aspects of Enlightenment thinking enables us to see how a model of independent thinking *can* provide us with a model of social practice. This is because it enables us to see the "peculiar sphere of reason" in terms of a set of practical principles and substantive commitments. From this perspective, the empirical domain of practices and of institutions can be viewed as enabling rather than as limiting rational reflection. Working toward the realization of these enabling conditions, however, is an ongoing task. As Kant remarks in the essay "Conjectures on the Beginning of Human History," culture "has perhaps not yet really begun" (VIII:116, *CB* 227). The development of a culture of enlightenment remains as urgent a task for us today as it was for Kant. We still stand under an injunction to make reason practical in the sense of claiming and preserving the fragile and difficult freedoms that make possible the public employment of our reason. The conclusion of chapter 3 reinforced the sobering results of the earlier analysis: while Kant enables us to view enlightenment as a historically realizable social project, this is possible only from the perspective of those who are already engaging in this project. A proper understanding of the historical context and the real scope of Kant's conception of enlightenment should help us to resist the deflationary conclusions arising from onesided accounts of the Enlightenment. While the conditions of public argument have undergone, and continue to undergo, extensive change, the challenge of developing an encompassing conception of reason that can determine ends, rather than merely the effective means for attaining them, remains one of the most important tasks placed upon us. The arguments of the philosophers and social theorists we have considered in this chapter can be seen as contributions to this process. Indeed, the ongoing debate about the meaning and limits of the Enlightenment project can be seen itself as a consequence of a public use of reason. For what else is such a debate if not a public investigation of the powers and limits of reason itself?

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Notes

Introduction: A Critical Answer to the Question, What Is Enlightenement?

1. See, James Schmidt, "What Is Enlightenment? A Question, Its Context, and Some Consequences," in James Schmidt (ed.), *What Is Enlightenment? Eighteenth-Century Answers and Twentieth-Century Questions* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), 31, and Keith Michael Baker and Peter Reill (eds.), *What's Left of Enlightenment? A Postmodern Question* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

2. Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" Catherine Porter (trans.), in Paul Rabinow (ed.), *The Foucault Reader* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987), 32.

3. Lawrence E. Klein, "Enlightenment as Conversation," in Baker and Reill, *What's Left of Enlightenment?* 163.

4. David Charles, "Method and Argument in the Study of Aristotle: A Critical Notice of the *Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*," in C. C. Taylor (ed.), *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, vol. 15 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 234. I owe this reference to Sophia Connell.

5. Max Horkheimer, "The Revolt of Nature," in *The Eclipse of Reason* (New York: Seabury, 1974, originally published in 1947), 92–127. I discuss this and other criticisms in greater detail in chapter 5.

6. Alasdair McIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (London: Duckworth, 1987), 39.

7. The kind of present-centered approach I discuss here is to be found in John Gray's recent book, *Enlightenment's Wake: Politics and Culture at the Close of the Modern Age* (London: Routledge, 1995). Gray surveys what he considers to be the ruinous legacy of "the Enlightenment project of universal emancipation and a universal

civilization" (viii), arguing that "we live today amid the dim ruins of the Enlightenment project, which was the only project of the modern period" (145). But, at the same time that he upholds this position, he castigates other political philosophers for turning to the Enlightenment in order to justify present practices: "recent political philosophy has been what Wittgenstein called 'bourgeois' philosophy—philosophy devoted to the search for 'foundations' for the practices of particular communities" (144). This argument is uninformative both about the Enlightenment and about the present, for it leaves unclear in what exactly the legacy of Enlightenment consists and why some appeals to this legacy, namely those that consider it to be destructive, are legitimate, while others are not.

8. The inadequacy of referring to the Enlightenment as a unified pan-European project has been brought out by a number of historical studies of the period. See, for example, Norbert Hinske, "Die Grundlinien der deutschen Aufklärung," in Raffaele Ciafardone (ed.), *Die Philosophie der deutschen Aufklärung* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1990), 407–58; see also Roy Porter and Mikulàš Teich (eds.), *The Enlightenment in National Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981). A complex intellectual map of the Enlightenment emerges from the essays collected in Peter Hulme and Ludmilla Jordanova (eds.), *The Enlightenment and its Shadows* (London: Routledge, 1990).

9. Klein, "Enlightenment as Conversation," in Baker and Reill, 164.

10. Simon Schama, "The Enlightenment in the Netherlands," in Porter and Teich, *The Enlightenment in National Context*, 54.

11. Johann Friedrich Zöllner, a leading member of the Berlin "Wednesday Society," put the question, what is enlightenment? in a footnote to his essay "Ist es rathsam, das Ehebündniß nicht ferner durch die Religion zu sanciren?" (Is it advisable not to provide a religious sanctification of marriage?), *Berlinische Monatsschrift* (1783), reprinted in Norbert Hinske (ed.), *Was ist Aufklärung? Beiträge aus der Berlinsichen Monatsschrift* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1973), 107–116. Although Zöllner's question provided the occasion for Kant's and Mendelssohn's replies, the debate about the nature of enlightenment was, as I show in chapter 1, already under way.

12. Richard Rorty, "The Continuity between the Enlightenment and Postmodernism," in Baker and Reill, *What's Left of Enlightenment?* 19.

13. Rorty, "The Continuity between the Enlightenment and Postmodernism," 23.

14. Rorty, "The Continuity between the Enlightenment and Postmodernism," 19.

15. Rorty, "The Continuity between the Enlightenment and Postmodernism," 27.

16. *CPR* Axii, n.α. Although Kant develops his own interpretation of criticism as a form of critique, this quotation can also be understood as expressing the intellectual attitude we find in the article entitled "Fact" authored by Diderot in the *Encyclopédie*: "Facts may be divided into three classes: divine acts, natural phenomena, and human actions. The first belong to theology, the second to philosophy, and the last to history properly speaking. All are equally subject to criticism" (*Enc* VII: 298). I examine in detail the relation between criticism and critique in chapter 2.

17. The term is used by Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno to characterize the "dissolving" or "decomposing" (*zersetzende*) rationality of the Enlightenment, *Dialektik der Aufklärung: Philosophische Fragmente* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1988), 12.

18. Gernot Böhme, "Beyond the Radical Critique of Reason," in Dieter Freundlieb and Wayne Hudson (eds), *Reason and Its Other. Rationality in Modern German Philosophy and Culture* (Providence and Oxford: Berg, 1993), 87.

19. In *Rival Enlightenments: Civil and Metaphysical Philosophy in Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), Ian Hunter correctly identifies the "formalism" of Kant's conception of enlightenment. He fails, however, to recognize the substantive and practical commitments that flow from it. He thus associates Kant with a conception of "philosophy . . . as *theoria*," and interprets the Kantian idea of a "rational community" as a metaphysical rather than a civil culture; see Hunter, *Rival Enlightenments*, 23 and 376. This is precisely the kind of interpretation my argument is intended to refute. Taking seriously Kant's critical conception of reason requires also that we take seriously the substantive and practical implications that follow from it. Central to Kant's argument is the idea that reasoning should be construed like a testing of arguments, rather than, as many critics claim, a consultation of an unerring faculty. A recent version of the latter view is to be found in Joseph Margolis, "Vicissitudes of Transcendental Reason," in Mitchell Aboulafia, Myra Bookman, and Catherine Kemp (eds.), *Habermas and Pragmatism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002). Margolis claims that modern philosophy is characterized by what he calls the "Cartesian (or Kantian) privilege" of reason, this a privilege granted to a "would-be faculty apt for discerning or judging what invariably, universally, or necessarily is true

or right"; see Margolis, "Vicissitudes of Transcendental Reason," 32–35.

20. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* was Habermas's *Habilitationschrift*. Initially intended for submission under Horkheimer and Adorno, who were dissatisfied with it, the thesis was subsequently submitted successfully to Wolfgang Abendroth in Marburg. The quotations are from the English edition, T. Burger and F. Lawrence (trans.), *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989).

21. Habermas, *Public Sphere*, 27.

22. Habermas, *Public Sphere*, 24.

23. Habermas, "Themes in Postmetaphysical Thinking," in William Mark Hohengarten (trans.), *Postmetaphysical Thinking* (Cambridge: Polity, 1992), 43.

24. The idea of "public reason" is absent from *A Theory of Justice* (originally published in 1971). Rawls presents it first in *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), where it is the topic of the Sixth Lecture, 212–54.

25. Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 213.

26. Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 213, n.2.

27. Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 231.

28. Karl Ameriks, *Kant and the Fate of Autonomy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 4 and 66.

29. J. N. Findlay, "Some Merits of Hegelianism," *Aristotelean Society Proceedings* 56 (1955–56), 1–24. Findlay employs this term in order to show how, in contrast with Hegel, Kant shows an apparent lack of concern with "this-worldly" issues. As I show in chapter 3, this is at best a onesided view of Kant's practical philosophy.

Chapter 1. The Enlightenment in Question

1. Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, trans. Fritz C. A. Koelln and James P. Pettegrove (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1951, originally published in Germany in 1932), 5.

2. Cassirer, *Enlightenment*, 6.

3. Alfred Baeumler, *Kants Kritik der Urteilskraft; Ihre Geschichte und Systematik* (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1924).

4. Cassirer, *Enlightenment*, 275.

5. Cassirer, *Enlightenment*, 276. Cassirer's identification here of art with the irrational is in any case highly problematic from a histori-

cal perspective because it minimizes the importance of the classicist tradition in the shaping of eighteenth-century aesthetic discourse.

6. Dena Goodman, *The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1994), 2.

7. Goodman, *The Republic of Letters*, 2.

8. Cited in Keith Michael Baker, *Condorcet: From Natural Philosophy to Social Mathematics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), 346.

9. The topic of the *Essay on the Reigns of Claudius and Nero*, Seneca's attempt to reconcile a public and a philosophical life, allows Diderot to engage in wider reflection about the role of the philosopher and his relation to his public: "When the philosopher despairs of doing good, he shuts himself up and distances himself from public affairs; he renounces the useless and dangerous task of defending the interests of his fellow-citizens" (XXV:412). We should note here that a number of Diderot's works discussed here were only published posthumously, while others, such as the *Salons*, which were published during his lifetime in Melchior Grimm's *Correspondance Littéraire*, had a very select and small public drawn mainly from the European aristocracy.

10. As Roger Masters points out, although Rousseau adopts a polemical stance, he does not identify himself with the "barbarian," but with the poet Ovid; see Roger D. Masters, (Rousseau) *Discourse I*, 65, n.1 and 71, n.36.

11. Norman Hampson, "Enlightenment in France," in Porter and Teich, *The Enlightenment in National Context*, 43.

12. Hampson, "Enlightenment in France," 45.

13. Hampson, ibid.

14. See Herbert Dieckmann, "The Concept of Knowledge in the *Encyclopédie*," in *Studien zur Europäischen Aufklärung* (München: Wilhelm Fink, 1974), 234–57. The commercial and publication history of the *Encyclopédie* is detailed in Robert Darnton, *The Business of the Enlightenment: A Publishing History of the Encyclopédie* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, Harvard University Press, 1979).

15. The key issue in the "affaire Calas" was religious intolerance: a Protestant, Jean Calas, was wrongly accused of the murder of his son, who, it was rumored, wished to become a Catholic. Calas was tortured and executed. Voltaire campaigned on behalf of the widow, who succeeded in clearing her husband's name, and later took up a number of similar cases in which people found retrospectively innocent had been executed on charges involving accusations of impiety.

16. The significance of the Salons for the formation of the concept of the public and the function of this concept in art criticism is discussed in Thomas E. Crow, *Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985). The ways in which "high" and "low" discourse cut across each other are examined in Arlette Farge, *Dire et mal Dire. L'opinion publique au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Seuil, 1992).

17. Keith Michael Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution: Essays on French Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 168.

18. François Furet and Mona Ozouf (eds.), *A Critical Dictionary of the French Revolution*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge Mass.: Belknap, Harvard University Press, 1989), 771.

19. Lester G. Crocker, *Diderot's Chaotic Order: Approach to Synthesis* (Princeton and London: Princeton University Press, 1974).

20. *Rameau's Nephew*, probably composed in 1762 and revised on several subsequent occasions, first appeared in 1805 in Leipzig in a German translation by Goethe as *Rameaus Neffe, ein Dialog von Diderot*. Schiller, who discovered the work originally, and later Hegel, who devotes to it a significant part of the sections in which he discusses the Enlightenment in his *Phenomenology*, are the first in a long line of thinkers who saw *Rameau's Nephew* as articulating an early criticism of the Enlightenment. See, W. G. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), trans., A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 315–19. For contemporary interpretations, see Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1972), 363–71 and MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 47–50.

21. *Pensées Philosophiques* (II:25). In this early work, Diderot ridicules a priori proofs of God's existence praising the skeptical stance for its "profound and disinterested examination" of different arguments (II:27). The hope, however, that the natural sciences can give satisfactory answers to questions such as What is a human being? or What is good? subsequently fades; see Paolo Casini, "Un rêve de l'an passé: Diderot et le Newtonisme," in Herbert Dieckmann (ed.) *Diderot und die Aufklärung* (München: Kraus International, 1980), 123–36.

22. *De l'Homme* appeared in 1772. The *Refutation of Helvetius*, composed probably in 1775, appeared in large part posthumously in the *Correspondance littéraire* from 1783 to 1786. While I agree with Anthony Strugnell that Diderot does not renounce his materialism in the *Refutation*, I seek to show that what troubles Diderot is Helvetius's value-reductionism and not, as Strugnell suggests, the epistemic paucity of Helvetius's account. See Anthony Strugnell, *Diderot's Politics: A*

Study of the Evolution of Diderot's Political Thought after the Encyclopédie (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), 60-62.

23. As David Funt demonstrates, Diderot's reflections on aesthetic judgment take a parallel path; see David Funt, "Diderot and the aesthetics of Enlightenment," *Diderot Studies* 11 (1968), 15–192. Diderot's aesthetics fall beyond the remit of the present discussion, which aims to trace the moral, civic, and political concerns that underpin the philosophical questions raised within the "critical Enlightenment."

24 Though Diderot officially left the project in 1772, his involvement had effectively ended in 1765, when the final volume of articles appeared. On the history of the project, see Jacques Proust, *Diderot et l'Encyclopédie*, new edition (Paris: Albin Michel, 1996).

25. I use the term "philosophical dialogue" to emphasize the stylistic and thematic continuities between fragments of larger works written in the form of a conversation and works that are often classed as fiction, such as *Rameau's Nephew* and the *Supplement to Bougainville's Voyage*, which I discuss here. The uniquely oral style of Diderot's prose is examined in Jacques Proust, "La ponctuation des textes de Diderot," in Dieckmann, *Diderot und die Aufklärung*, 7–24.

26. Diderot's argument that absolute political power is divisive is not part of a republican defense. As both Strugnell and Geoffrey Bremner show, Diderot's primary concern is with political stability; see Strugnell, *Diderot's Politics*, 8, and also Geoffrey Bremner, *Order and Chance: The Pattern of Diderot's Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 101–2.

27. The distribution of grain caused the 1725 riots and, five years after Diderot's *Apologia for Galiani* of 1770, it caused the famous "war of flours." In his *Dialogues sur le commerce des blés*, the Abbé Galiani defended the need for the imposition of controls to the export of wheat, while favoring the liberalization of the internal market.

28. The question of objective measure or rule runs through Diderot's work: "Is man condemned to be always at variance both with himself and with his fellow-men about the only things that matter to him: truth, goodness, beauty? Are these local, momentary, arbitrary things, words empty of meaning?... But from where can I derive the invariable measure that I am lacking and searching for?" *De la poésie dramatique*, X:422–23. See also his reflections on the possibility of adducing an "eternal, unchanging rule of the beautiful" in *Essai sur la Peinture*, XIV:374–78, and the inconclusive discussions in the *Salons* (XIV:408, *Salon I* 237 and XVI:203–6, *Salon II* 105–7).

29. Diderot's uncertainty about the normative status of the general will can be seen in the following: "Individual wills are mutable, the

general will, however, is constant. Here is the cause of the durability of laws, whether good or *bad*, and of the vicissitudes of taste" (*Réfutation*, 912, emphasis added).

30. Diderot's reflections on what is a human being are characteristically aporetic: "is morality then confined to the boundaries of the species? . . . but what is a species? . . . a multitude of similarly structured (*organisées*) individuals . . . this structure then would be the basis of morality. . . . I think so . . . and what of Polyphemus, whose structure had almost nothing in common with that of the companions of Ulisses, he would have been no more abominable in eating Ulisses' companions, than Ulisses' companions eating a hare or a rabbit . . . and what of kings, what of God who is alone of his kind?" (XVI:206, *Salon II* 107).

31. The *Supplement to Bougainville's Voyage* was composed in 1771, an early version appeared in the *Correspondance Littéraire* the following year, and was published posthumously in 1796 (XII:577–644). On *Rameau's Nephew* see note 23 earlier.

32. Mason and Wokler, for instance, argue that "In its fundamental contrast between the trappings of culture and civilised morality with the free expression of natural impulses, the *Supplément* does indeed articulate Rousseau's main theme," "Introduction," in John Hope Mason and Robert Wokler (eds.), *Denis Diderot: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), xviii.

33. Foucault, *Histoire de la folie*, 365.

34. See, for instance, Bernhard Lypp, "Die Lekturen von 'Le Neuveu de Rameau' durch Hegel und Foucault," Dieckmann, *Diderot und die Aufklärung*, 137–59.

35. "Vertumnis, quotquot sunt, natus iniquis," Horace, *Satires*, II, vii, line 14. Diderot's description of the nephew owes a lot to Ovid's treatment of the story of Vertumnus in his *Metamorphoses*, book xiv, lines 679–81.

36. The following exchange is typical: "He: Drink good wine, blow yourself out with luscious food, have a tumble with lovely women, lie on soft beds. Apart from that the rest is vanity. I: What! Fighting for one's country? He: Vanity! There's no such thing left. From pole to pole all I can see is tyrants and slaves" (XII:114, *RN* 65).

37. Posterity is the key theme of the correspondence with Falconet; see especially Seventh Letter to Falconet, February 1766, *Corr* XV:47. See also: "All in good time. An error crumbles and makes place for an error that crumbles in its turn. But a truth that comes to be and the truth that follows it are two truths that stay" (*Réfutation*, 917). The classical past is invoked with a certain poignancy in the *Essay on the Reigns of Claudius and Nero*: "Oh Seneca! You are and will forever

be together with Socrates and all illustrious unfortunate men and all the great men of Antiquity, one of the sweetest ties between me and my friends, between the educated men of all times and their friends" (XXV:55).

38. Since their first meeting in 1745, Diderot encouraged Rousseau's philosophical work, an encouragement Rousseau grew to resent. Their close and highly eventful friendship ended ingloriously and acrimoniously some thirty years later in 1770. Different aspects of the philosophical interchange between Diderot and Rousseau, and Diderot's influence on the two *Discourses* are discussed in George R. Havens, "Rousseau's First Discourse and the *Pensées Philosophiques* of Diderot," *Romanic Review* XXXIII (1942), 356–59, and "Diderot, Rousseau and the "Discours sur l'inégalité,'" *Diderot Studies* 3 (1961), 219–62 and Jean Fabre, "Deux Frères Ennemis: Diderot et Jean-Jacques," *Diderot Studies* 3 (1961), 155–213.

39. See the article "Hobbisme" (1765) in the *Encyclopédie*, VII:406–8. Elsewhere, after describing the terrible conditions of work in the mining and logging industries, Diderot concludes: "Only the horrors of misery and brutalisation can reduce man to these jobs. Ah! Jean-Jacques, how badly you have pleaded the cause of the state of nature (*l'état sauvage*) against civil society (*l'état social*).... Man forms societies in order better to fight against his constant enemy, nature" (*Réfutation*, 902–3).

40. Letter to Christophe de Beaumont, IV:927–29.

41. There is a long line of commentators who view Rousseau's antiphilosophical stance in terms of his psychological idiosyncrasies. See Ernst Cassirer, *Rousseau, Kant, Goethe* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1954); George Armstrong Kelly, *Idealism, Politics and History: The Sources of Hegelian Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 25–33; Yves Bélaval, "Rationalisme sceptique et dogmatisme du sentiment chez Jean-Jacques Rousseau," *Annales de la Société J.-J. Rousseau* XXXVIII (1974), 7–24. Jean Starobinski appreciates the methodological function of Rousseau's intellectual positioning but inscribes it within a quasi-mystical view of Rousseau as a visionary, able to see what escapes from his contemporaries; see Jean Starobinski, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: la Transparence et l'Obstable. Suivi de Sept Essais sur Rousseau*, new edition (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), 22–27. The influence of Rousseau's self-understanding on his philosophical strategy, but not how the latter informs the former, is discussed in Marshall Berman, *The Politics of Authenticity: Radical Individualism and the Emergence of Modern Society* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1971), 76–88.

42. Charles-Irénée Castel Abbé de Saint-Pierre, *Annales Politiques* completed and circulated by 1730. In 1758, following the (posthumous) publication of the *Annales*, Rousseau undertook to edit the Abbé de Saint-Pierre's papers. The quotation from the *Annales* is cited in Francis Haskell, *History and Its Images: Art and the Interpretation of the Past* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), 205. Haskell gives a good account of the eighteenth-century debate about the value of the visual arts. On Rousseau's complex views on the arts, see Christopher Kelly, "Rousseau and the Case against (and for) the Arts," in C. Orwin and N. Tarcov (eds.), *The Legacy of Rousseau* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 20–42.

43. "Last Reply" (to M. Bordes), III:79.

44. Letter to M. Grimm on a refutation of M. Gautier, III:62.

45. Letter to Rousseau, 30 August 1755, III:1,379. As I argue here, Rousseau's so-called primitivism does not give us an accurate account of his views. An early challenge to this popular misconception can be found in Arthur O. Lovejoy, "The Supposed Primitivism of Rousseau's "Discourse on Inequality,'" *Essays in the History of Ideas* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1948), 14–37. See also Eric Weil's review of Lovejoy's "J.-J. Rousseau et sa Politique," *Critique* 56 (1952), 3–28.

46. An influential nonrealist interpretation of the state of nature in the *Second Discourse*, which stresses precisely the nostalgic elements I seek to refute, is proposed by Jean Starobinski, in *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, 330–55; see also Henri Gouhier, "Nature et Histoire dans la Pensée de Jean-Jacques Rousseau," *Annales de la Société J.-J. Rousseau* XXXIII (1953-1955), 7–48.

47. "Social order is a sacred right and the foundation of all other rights. This right, however, does not come from nature, it must therefore be founded on conventions" (III:351–52, *SC* 3–4). Later Rousseau makes the point again: "Since no man has natural authority over his fellow, . . . we must conclude that conventions form the basis of all legitimate authority among men" (III:355, *SC* 7). The "unnatural" character of social life and political virtue, but not of freedom itself, is discussed briefly in Cassirer, *Rousseau, Kant, Goethe*, 30–31 and also Richard L. Velkley, "The Tension in the Beautiful: On Culture and Civilization in Rousseau and German Philosophy," in Orwin and Tarkov, *The Legacy of Rousseau*, 65–86. An interpretation that is closer to the one I pursue here can be found in Robert Wokler, "Rousseau and His Critics on the Fanciful Liberties We Have Lost," in R. Wokler (ed.), *Rousseau and Liberty* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1995), 189–212.

48. Rousseau argues that the "fundamental problem" to which the social contract provides the solution is "to find a form of association that will defend and protect with the entire common force the person and goods of each associate, and in which each, though uniting himself with all, may still obey himself alone, and remain as free as before" (III:360, *SC* 12). More explicitly, Rousseau argues later that "what man loses through the social contract is his natural liberty . . . what he gains is civil liberty" (III:366, *SC* 16). In his own comments on the argument of the *Social Contract*, Rousseau reiterates the importance of distinguishing between natural and civil liberty: "People have sought to confuse independence and liberty. These two things are so different from each other as to be mutually exclusive" (*Letters from the Mountain*, III:838).

49. See, for example, Wokler, "Rousseau and His Critics," in *Rousseau and Liberty,* 189.

50. See Patrick Riley, "Rousseau's General Will; Freedom of a Particular Kind," in Wokler, *Rousseau and Liberty*, 1–28. Riley locates "general will" midway between "particular" and "universal," but this creates precisely the problem mentioned here, namely, that what counts as general are the contingent interests of a particular community. This can certainly be the basis for a kind of politics but cannot be maintained without contradiction by Rousseau for whom not every cohesive society is a good society.

51. Brian Barry has sought to connect Rousseau's argument here with the Condorcet "jury theorem"; see Brian Barry, *Political Argument* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), 292–93. Condorcet's theorem shows that well-qualified members of a jury can, when judging independently, get the right answer according to preestablished criteria. The process Rousseau describes, however, is very different from Condorcet's "jury," the crucial difference being that the testing of *one's own* conscience is integral to the decision process: Rousseau's legislators are not impartial spectators, they make decisions which involve them directly and which depend on good motivation.

52. The *Plan for a Corsican Constitution* (1765) appeared posthumously in 1861; *Considerations on the Government of Poland and Plans for Its Reform* (1771) also appeared posthumously in 1782. In the latter work Rousseau observes that "There will never be a good and solid constitution unless the law reigns over the hearts of the citizens. . . . But how can hearts be reached?" (III:955). After a lengthy description of games and festivals that forge the civic bond, he concludes: "It is the national institutions that shape the genius, character, tastes and morals of a people . . . [and] inspire it with ardent love of their country based on ineradicable habits" (III:960).

53. "What people is fit for such legislation then? One which, already bound by some unity of origin, interest, or convention, has never felt the real yoke of law ... one in which every member is known by every other ... one which unites the consistency of an ancient people with the docility of a new one" (III:390, *SC* 41).

54. The servants are described as eager to serve: "the most agreeable thing is seeing them doing their job gaily and with pleasure" (II:527); men and women are kept apart to avoid "dangerous familiarity," which establishes a "habit that is more powerful than authority itself" (II:556–57). Instead of forming factions among themselves, the servants are "united in order better to serve. Whatever interest they have in forging loving relations with each other is far superseded by that of pleasing [their master]" (II: 587, see also II:602–11). It is unclear whether Rousseau endorses the Wolmar regime. He portrays both main characters, St. Preux and Julie, as initially admiring but subsequently unhappy with life under these conditions. This leads me to agree with Alessandro Ferrara that Rousseau was alert to the oppressive character of the regime he describes; see Alessandro Ferrara in *Modernity and Authenticity: A Study of the Social and Ethical Thought of Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1993), 93–109. The contrary view is taken by Berman in *The Politics of Authenticity*, 257.

55. The strongly interventionist nature of Rousseau's ideas concerning civic education is overlooked in classical studies such as Judith Shklar's *Men and Citizens: A Study of Rousseau's Social Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), and John Charvet's *The Social Problem in the Philosophy of Rousseau* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974).

56. R. A. Leigh, *Rousseau and the Problem of Tolerance in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979).

57. Voltaire, *Lettre à un premier commis* (20 June 1733, published in 1746), in Haydn Mason, and Pierre Rétat (eds.), *The Complete Works of Voltaire*, vol. 9 (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1999), 320. We should note here that Diderot and Rousseau encountered both censorship and persecution. Following the publication of his *Letter on the Blind*, Diderot spent a month in the prison of Vincennes in 1749, while Rousseau had to flee Paris after the public condemnation of *Émile*. In June of 1762 copies of this work, together with the *Social Contract*, were confiscated and burned in the city of Geneva—the city whose people and institutions had attracted his most fulsome praise in the dedication "To the Republic of Geneva," of the *Second Discourse* (II:111–21, *Discourse II* 78–90).

58. Jean-Jacques Courtine and Claudine Haroche (eds.), Abbé Joseph Antoine Toussaint Dinouart, *L'Art de se taire* (1771) (Grenoble: Millon, 1996), 3.

59. Lewis White Beck, *Early German Philosophy: Kant and His Predecessors* (Bristol: Thoemmes, 1996), 10. Among the "rare instances" of persecution, we should note Christian Wolff's and Christian Thomasius's expulsion from their universities (Wolff was formally reinstated by Frederick II, in 1740, upon the latter's accession to the throne) and, also, Kant's problems with the censor concerning the publication of *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, under Frederick William II.

60. A key study is Rudolf Vierhaus, *Deutschland im 18: Jahrhundert. Politische Verfassung, soziales Gefüge, geistige Bewegungen* (Göttingen and Zürich: Vanderhoek and Ruprecht, 1987). The importance of social clubs and of periodical publications in the forging of political identities is discussed in Hans Bödeker, "Prozesse und Strukturen politischer Bewusstseinsbildung der deutschen Aufklärung," in Hans Erich Bödeker and Ulrich Hermann (eds.), *Aufklärung als Politisierung—Poltitisierung der Aufklärung* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1987), 10–31, see also his "Zeitschriften und politische Öffentlichkeit: Zur Politisierung der deutscher Aufklärung in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts," in Hans Erich Bödeker and Etienne François (eds.), *Aufklärung-Lumières und Politik: Zur politischen Kultur der deutschen und französichen Aufklärung* (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 1996), 209–30. A philosophical refutation of the Stäelian view of German thought as essentially apolitical is presented in Frederick C. Beiser, *Enlightenment, Revolution, and Romanticism: The Genesis of Modern German Political Thought, 1790–1800* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992).

61. Ernst Ferdinand Klein cited in Günther Birtsch, "Die Berliner Mittwochsgesellschaft (1783–1798)," in Hans Erich Bödeker and Ulrich Hermann (eds.), *Über den Prozess der Aufklärung in Deutschland im 18: Jahrhundert. Personen, Institutionen und Medien* (Göttingen: Vandenhoek and Ruprecht, 1987), 95.

62. An important forum for intellectual debate was the new Royal Academy for the Arts and Sciences, founded in 1744 to replace the ailing Berlin Academy, the *Societas Regia Scientarum*, founded in 1700 by Leibniz. The history and role of the academy is examined in James W. McClellan, *Science Re-organised: Scientific Societies in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

63. Letter to C. Wolff 23 May 1740, in J. D. E. Preuß (ed.), *Oeuvres de Fréderic le Grand* (Berlin 1850).

64. Werner Schneiders, "Die Philosophie des aufgeklärten Absolutismus: Zum Verhältnis von Philosophie und Politik, nicht nur im 18. Jahrhundert," in Bödeker and Hermann, *Aufklärung als Politisierung*, 35.

65. These issues are explored in detail in Werner Schneiders, *Die wahre Aufklärung: zum Selbstverständnis der deutschen Aufklärung* (München: Alber, 1974); see also, Norbert Hinske, "Die tragenden Grundideen der deutschen Aufklärung," in Ciafardone, *Die Philosophie der deutschen Aufklärung*, 407–58 and Joachim Whaley, "The Protestant Enlightenment in Germany," in Porter and Teich, *The Enlightenment in National Context*, 106–17.

66. Rudolf Vierhaus, "Die aufgeklärte Schriftsteller: Zur sozialen Charakteristik einer selbsternannten Elite," in Bödeker and Hermann, *Über den Prozess der Aufklärung*, 53–65.

67. Ursula Becher, "Zum politischen Diskurs der deutschen Aufklärung," in Bödeker and François, *Aufklärung-Lumières und Politik*, 189–207.

68. Mendelssohn's, "Über die Frage: "Was heisst aufklären?' " appeared in the September issue of the *Berlinische Monatsschrift* and Reinhold's "Gedanken über Aufklärung" appeared in three installments in the July, August, and September issues of *Der Teutsche Merkur* III.

69. See Gisbert Beyerhaus, "Kants 'Program' der Aufklärung aus dem Jahre 1784," *Kant-Studien* 26 (1921), 1–15. See also F. V. L. Plessing's letter to Kant, dated 15 March 1784, in which he describes in rather gloomy terms the retrenchment of Enlightenment, and expresses the fear the "despotism, fanaticism, and superstition are trying to conquer all of Europe," in Arnulf Zweig ed., *Kant Philosophical Coerrespondence* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 115.

70. Alexander Altmann, *Die trostvolle Aufklärung: Studien zur Metaphysik und politische Theorie Moses Mendelssohns* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann Holzboog, 1982), 13–24.

71. The exact question set by the Royal Academy was "Ist es dem gemeinen Haufen der Menschen nützlich, getäuscht zu werden, indem man ihn entweder zu neuen Irrtümern verleitet oder bei den gewohnten Irrtümern erhält?" The essay topic was originally suggested by Friedrich II, in a letter of 16 October 1777. See Werner Krauss, *Studien zur deutschen und französischen Aufklärung* (Berlin: Rutten und Loening, 1963), 69. Johann Karl Wihelm Möhsen provided this German version of the original French in a lecture delivered at the Berlin Wednesday Society in 1783, published, together with the responses from other members, in Ludwig Keller, "Die Berliner

Mittwochs-Gesellschaft: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Geistesentwicklung Preußens am Ausgange des 18. Jahrhunderts," *Monatshefte der Comenius-Gesellschaft*, 5 (1896), 73–85; Möhsen's lecture is translated in Schmidt, *What Is Enlightenment?* 49–52.

72. Mendelssohn, "Votum zu Möhsens Aufsatz über Aufklärung" (1783), *Jubiläumausgabe* VI:1, 109.

73. Mendelssohn to August von Hennings, 21 September 1784, *Jubiläumausgabe* XIII, 244.

74. Mendelssohn to Hennings, 244.

75. Mendelssohn to Hennings, ibid.

76. Mendelssohn to Hennings, ibid.

77. See also: "the content of common knowledge is shared, and its form popular," Reinhold, *Fundamental Concepts and Principles of Ethics* (1798), in Sabine Roehr, *A Primer on German Enlightenment with a Translation of Karl Leonhar Reinhold's Fundamental Concepts and Principles of Ethics* (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1995), 205–6.

78. Mendelssohn countenances state censorship to prevent the damage done by freely expressed "nefarious opinions," on the grounds that the person expressing such views "harms others immediately and directly"; see Mendelssohn, "Ueber die Freiheit, seine Meinung zu sagen" (1783), *Jubiläumausgabe*, VI:1, 124. On the long shadow cast by the 1784 essay competition and the debate on censorship, see Uwe Böker and Julie A. Hibbard (eds.), *Sites of Discourse: Public and Private Spheres. Legal Culture* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2002).

Chapter 2. The Idea of a Culture of Enlightenment

1. Robert B. Pippin, *Modernism as a Philosophical Problem*, second edition (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 48.

2. Horace, *Epistles* I, 2, 40.

3. Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" Catherine Porter (trans.) in Paul Rabinow (ed.), *The Foucault Reader* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987), 35.

4. Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?" 34.

5. Foucault, ibid.

6. Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?" 35.

7. Foucault, ibid.

8. Foucault, ibid.

9. Foucault, ibid.

10. Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?" 37.

11. Hans Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, trans. Robert M. Wallace (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985), 377. See also note 14 below.

12. The concept of practical freedom, which is discussed in the Dialectic and also in the Canon (see *CPR* A802/B830), can be seen as a precursor to the concept of autonomy introduced in the *Groundwork*. The different inflexions given to "practical freedom" in the Dialectic and the Canon, which are explored in detail by Allison, do not affect my argument here; see Henry Allison, *Kant's Theory of Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 54–70.

13. Kant defines *das Praktische* as "everything that is possible through freedom," *CPR* A800, B828; see also: "Practical is called all that which relates to freedom," *Lectures on Paedagogy*, IX:455.

14. The translation of the German words *mündig* and *unmündig* respectively as "mature" and "immature" gives the misleading impression that Kant refers to an organic/natural process. Pippin, for instance, commenting on the "mix of natural and artificial images," detects an ambiguity in the "biological image of maturation" suggested by Kant's use of maturity; see, Pippin, *Modernism as a Philosophical Problem*, 48. The German word *mündig*, however, does not have connotations of ripeness. It is connected to the word for mouth, *Mund*, and is specifically used to designate someone who has reached an age at which he or she can be *legally* recognized as independent, as having rights and responsibilities, in short, as having a voice.

15. The point is made by Hans-Georg Gadamer in his essay "Authority and Critical Freedom," in *The Enigma of Health*, trans. Jason Gaiger and Nicholas Walker (Cambridge: Polity, 1996), 117–24.

16. Samuel Formey was the Secretary of the Royal Academy in Berlin. He remarked that "the literate public is naturally disposed to consult the learned companies and to regard their responses as decisions of oracles," adding that this "wisely exercised dictature" is "a great advance over the previous regime of superstition"; cited in McClellan, *Science Re-organised*, 27.

17. As I argue in the introduction, the concepts of public reason employed by Rawls and Habermas are best viewed as elaborations of ideas drawn partly from Kant and partly from Rousseau, Mill, and, in Habermas's case, also Peirce and the tradition of American Pragmatism. Since my aim here is to show how the concept of the public use of reason makes sense *internally* to Kant's argument and the presuppositions of his critical philosophy, I will be focusing on interpretations that are closer to Kant's text. In recent years there have been

a number of studies that focus on the historical and political context and significance of Kant's use of the concept of "public." John Christian Laursen has shown that Kant's own distinctive interpretation of the terms "public" and "private" must be seen in a context in which these terms were already undergoing a process of redefinition in order to meet different political expectations; see John Christian Laursen, "The Subversive Kant: The Vocabulary of "Public" and 'Publicity'," *Political Theory* 14 (1986), 584–88, reprinted in Schmidt, *What Is Enlightenment?* 253–69. See also James Schmidt, "What Enlightenment Was: How Moses Mendelssohn and Immanuel Kant Answered the *Berlinische Monatsschrift*," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 30:1 (1992), 77–101. The first systematic study to bring into full view the importance of public debate in Kant's political philosophy is Hans Saner's *The Sources of Kant's Political Thought: Its Origins and Development* (this is the first volume of the original German, *Kants Weg vom Krieg zum Frieden*, published in 1967) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 73–107. However, how "public" relates to "enlightenment" and the *normative* weight it may carry is comparatively less well explored. A very brief but suggestive account is to be found in Hannah Arendt's 1970s *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* edited by Ronald Beiner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 33–40. See also Thomas Auxter, "Kant's Conception of the Private Sphere," *The Philosophical Forum* 12 (1981), 295–310; Larry Krasnoff, "The Fact of Politics: History and Teleology in Kant," *European Journal of Philosophy* 2:1 (1994), 23–40; Thomas McCarthy, "Enlightenment and the Idea of Public Reason," *European Journal of Philosophy* 3:3 (1995), 242–56. The more detailed treatment of public reason is to be found in Onora O'Neill, *Constructions of Reason: Explorations of Kant's Practical Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 28–50, and more recently in "Kant's Conception of Public Reason," in Volker Gerhardt, Rolf-Peter Horstmann, and Ralph Schumacher (eds.), *Kant und die Berliner Aufklärung*, vol. 1 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2001), 35–47. Although not directly concerned with publicity and enlightenment, Otfried Höffe's essay on the democratic underpinnings of Kant's critique of reason itself, which takes up some of the themes discussed by Arendt and O'Neill, is relevant to the argument here; see Otfried Höffe, "Eine republikanische Vernunft; Zur Kritik des Solipsismus-Vorwurfs," in Gerhard Schönrich and Yasushi Kato (eds.), *Kant in der Discussion der Moderne* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1996), 396–407.

18. Auxter, "Kant's Conception of the Private Sphere," 306. Auxter refers to Kant's brief treatment of the term "private" in the

Logic, which, as he rightly points out, "makes it difficult to believe that he could have ever used the term '*privat*' to refer to a closed and isolated province which ought to be protected from intruders,'" 305. I discuss the *Logic* in section 4 below.

19. O'Neill, *Constructions*, 34.

20. Auxter, "Private Sphere," 305.

21. O'Neill, *Constructions*, 34.

22. O'Neill, ibid.

23. The "Orientation" essay was a contribution to a debate regarding the need to place limits on philosophical speculation. For the context of and issues relating to this debate, see George di Giovanni, "The Jacobi-Mendelssohn Dispute over Lessing's Alleged Spinosism," *Kant-Studien* 1 (1989), 44–58. However, as we shall see in the next section, no limits a priori can be placed on the content of free discussion. The principles of public argument apply equally whether it is philosophers debating Spinoza's pantheism or citizens debating tax policies. The free debate model of intellectual autonomy applies to all communications, irrespective of their topic. It is, however, true that the autonomy criterion is not the *appropriate* one for all communications. Although it would be absurd to apply it to communications such as reciting a poem, giving instructions, etc., it has a second-order applicability when we come to *judge* the poem, the instructions given, etc.

24. The universalizability test for thinking bears a clear resemblance to the universal law formula of the categorical imperative, insofar as in both cases we are asked to examine whether the underlying "local" principles or rules we intend to adopt can be conceived as universally binding. However, the universalizability test for thinking lacks the categorical character of the latter. It is indeed this basic recognition of corrigibility that frames the whole process of public debate. Whereas in moral deliberation I am the final judge and jury, argument has a necessarily irreducibly dyadic relation, it involves both speaker and addressee, both engaged in discussion, revision of arguments, debate.

25. The essay "On the Common Saying: 'This May Be True in Theory, but It Does Not Apply in Practice'" was first published in the *Berlinische Monatsschrift* in 1793; "Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch," was first published in 1795 and a second enlarged edition appeared the following year.

26. Stanley Axinn, "Kant, Authority, and the French Revolution," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 32, 423–32. The role of publicity in establishing a bridge between Kant's political and moral philosophy is discussed in Jürgen Habermas, "Publizität als Prinzip der Vermittlung von Politik und Moral (Kant)," originally in *Struktur-*

wandel der Öffentlichkeit. Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft (Berlin: Neuwied, 1963), reprinted in Zwi Batscha, *Materialien zu Kants Rechtsphilosophie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1976), 175–90. Harry van der Linden, in *Kantian Ethics and Socialism* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1988), who interprets publicity as a right, argues that the principle of publicity fails because it sets too high a standard; see van der Linden, *Kantian Ethics and Socialism*, 186–87. As I argue, however, publicity stems directly from the idea of the contract and thus should not be seen either as a right of the people or a duty of the government but as a transcendental principle of right that describes the minimal conditions of legitimacy for a law.

27. Kant insists that publicity is a *formal attribute* that every claim to rightness must possess when we "abstract from all its material aspects," VIII:381, *PP* 125. He further describes it as a "transcendental principle," which is valid axiomatically and thus "without any demonstration," VIII:382, *PP* 126.

28. See for instance John Dewey's defence of publicity in *The Public and Its Problems*, J. A. Boydston (ed.), *The Later Works*, vol. 2 (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1985), 167ff.

29. In "What Is Enlightenment?" Kant argues that "To test whether any particular measure can be agreed upon as a law for a people, we need only ask whether a people could well impose such a law upon itself. [. . .] But something which a people may not even impose upon itself can still less be imposed on it by a monarch; for his legislative authority depends precisely upon his uniting the collective will of the people in his own," VIII: *WE* 57–58.

30. Kant makes a similar argument in the "Enlightenment" essay with regard to the "unauthorised and criminal" claims to authority of past ecclesiastical synods, VIII:39, *WE* 57. Returning on this issue in "Theory and Practice," he makes the important point that there are limits to the application of the general principle of legitimacy, arguing that a people is not *authorized* to establish a law preventing "its own descendants from making further progress in religious understanding or from correcting any past mistakes" VIII:305, *TP* 85.

31. See VIII:381, *PP* 125–26.

32. Kant claims that a maxim "which I cannot publicly acknowledge without thereby inevitably arousing the resistance of everyone to my plans, can only have stirred up this necessary and general (hence a priori foreseeable) opposition against me because it is itself unjust and thus constitutes a threat to everyone" VIII:381, *PP* 126. The problem of demagoguery with respect to the politics of public reasoning is discussed

in Habermas, "Publizität als Prinzip der Vermittlung von Politik und Moral (Kant)" and in Larry Krasnoff, "Enlightenment and Agency in Kant," in Gerhardt, Horstmann, and Schumacher, *Kant und die Berliner Aufklärung*, vol. 4, 28–34. Habermas and more explicitly Krasnoff seek a teleological solution to the problem. This, however, overlooks the inherent constraints of public reasoning, which are central to the account I present here. While Kant's interpretation of enlightenment has a historical/teleological dimension, which I explore in the next section, it is not the goal pursued that defines enlightenment, but rather the "how" of one's reasoning.

33. MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (London: Duckworth, 1988), 352–53.

34. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1979), 239–40.

35. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 245.

36. Johann Gottfried Herder, *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit* (Yet Another Philosophy of History for the Instruction of Humankind), Bernard Suphan (ed.), *Sämmtliche Werke*, vol. 5 (Berlin: Weidmannische Verlag, 1877–1910), 475–586, here 535.

37. Herder, *Auch eine Philosophie*, 582.

38. While Hamann's *Metacritique* has a seemingly narrow target, namely, Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, which Hamann viewed as epitomizing the rationalistic ideals of the "critical century," it also enables its author to rehearse his criticisms about the doctrinaire and limited character of the Berlin *Aufklärung*. See, Johann Georg Hamann, *Metacritique on the Purism of Reason*, trans. K. Haynes, in Schmidt, *What Is Enlightenment?*, 154–59, composed in 1784 and circulated widely thereafter, published posthumously in 1800. I consider Hamann's criticisms in greater detail in the final section of this chapter.

39. Hamann, *Metacritique*, 155.

40. Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, 39.

41. "The guardians . . . will soon see to it that by far the largest part of mankind (including the entire fair sex) should consider the step forward to maturity not only as difficult but also as highly dangerous" VIII:35, *WE* 54.

42. Susan Mendus, "Kant: 'An Honest but Narrow-Minded Bourgeois?'" in Ellen Kennedy and Susan Mendus eds., *Women in Western Political Philosophy: Kant to Nietzsche* (Brighton: Wheatsheaf, 1987), p. 38. It should be noted here, that Hamann, whose reaction to the "Enlightenment" essay I discuss in section 6, took also Kant to task on the question of women, arguing that the

social position of women disabled them from making use of their freedom to think for themselves: "How does the ceremonial costume of freedom help me if I am at home in slave irons?" Letter to C. J. Kraus, 18 December 1784, in Johann Georg Hamann, *Briefewechsel*, 1783–1785, A. Henkel (ed.), vol. 5 (Frankfurt: Insel, 1965), 292.

43. Wolfgang Kersting, for instance, following here Reihardt Brandt, considers the possession of property as an empirical and hence inadequate criterion of citizenship; see Wolfgang Kersting, "Politics, Freedom and Order: Kant's Political Philosophy," in Paul Guyer (ed.), *Cambridge Companion to Kant* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 342–66; Reihardt Brandt, "Menschenlehre und Güterlehre: Zur Geschichte und Begründung des Rechts auf Leben, Freiheit, und Eigentum," in Johannes Schwartländer and Dietmar Willoweit (eds.), *Das Recht des Menschen auf Eigentum* (Kehl am Rhein: Angel, 1983), 19–31.

44. Lessing makes the point that although Frederick II, unlike his successor, was quite tolerant of religious criticism, and indeed encouraged it, he was less tolerant of political criticism. See Lessing's letter to Friedrich Nicolai, 25 August 1769, cited in Reiss, *Political Writings*, 8.

45. See also "Contest of Faculties," VII:27.

46. The "Contest of Faculties" also encountered problems with the censors, see Kant's letter to J. H. Teftrunk, dated 5 April 1798, in Zweig, *Kant Philosophical Correspondence*, 249–50.

47. See for instance, Ronald Dworkin, "Women and Pornography," *New York Review of Books*, 21 October 1993, Katherine MacKinnon, *Only Words* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993). A Kantian position on the issues debated in this broadly understood context of free speech can of course be developed. The material, however, would have to come not from the works I have been considering here and which focus on the issue of free argument, but from his moral philosophy.

48. It is only in the "Contest of Faculties" that Kant expresses a concern about the vulnerability of "intellectual and moral culture," recognizing that it may, after all, require political support and a "constitution based on genuine principles of right," VII:93, *CF* 189.

49. The lack of a connection between public use of reason and political right goes some way toward explaining Kant's silence on these issues in the *Metaphysical Elements of Justice*.

50. G. Felicitas Munzel, *Kant's Conception of Moral Character: The Critical Link of Morality, Anthropology, and Reflective Judgment* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 231. I agree with Munzel, however, that the second maxim draws a close relation

between publicity and universalizability and am generally sympathetic to her argument that there is a case to be made not just for a moral but also for a theoretical character in Kant.

51. While noting the importance of communication to reasoning, Arendt interprets Kant's idea of "thinking in community with others" along the lines suggested by the idea of "communicability" in the *Critique of Judgement*; Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, 40. This, as I argue here, is misleading. In the *Critique of Judgement*, Kant draws on a wholly different set of assumptions to defend the "objectivity" of aesthetic judgments. Briefly, while in the latter case, Kant speaks of faculties shared by all human beings—namely, the understanding and imagination—in the context of autonomous reasoning, no such assumptions are made or are necessary. That Kant actively encourages us to enter in discussion with others is a point often overlooked in the literature. Even a sympathetic reader such as Jürgen Habermas has argued that Kant only requires discussion in *foro interno*. See J. Habermas, "Morality and Ethical Life: Does Hegel's Critique of Kant Apply to Discourse Ethics?" in *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, trans. Christian Lenhardt and Shierry Weber Nicholsen (Cambridge: Polity, 1990), 195–215. Those interpretations, like Arendt's, that take their cue from Kant's discussion of beauty and the conditions of aesthetic judgment also underplay or ignore the communicative dimension of autonomy; see Rudolf Makkreel, *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

52. Makkreel, *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant*, 160.

53. See also VII:228, *Anthropology* 96; IX:57, *Logic* 564.

54. See also IX:57, *Logic* 563, V:294, *CJ* 161.

55. In the "Dohna-Wundlacken Logic" the comparison of one's opinions with those of others is also called a "strong criterion of truth," Young, *Lectures on Logic*, 475.

56. In the "Vienna Logic," based on lectures in the early 1780s, Kant does argue that agreement can be used as an external *criterium*, or "ground for the supposition that I have judged correctly," Young, *Lectures on Logic*, 321. However, this is part of a discussion of prejudice that aims to show the appeal and indeed usefulness of certain prejudices, including that of following the majority. While it offers a more positive gloss on the mechanical aids to reason than later works do, the argument is not in its essentials all that different from that presented in the "Jäsche Logic," where Kant counts among the "prejudices of prestige (*Ansehen*)" the propensity to follow the judgment of the majority

"on the supposition that what everyone says must probably be true" IX: 77–78, *Logic* 580–81.

57. In the section on logical egoism in the "Dohna-Wundlacken Logic," Kant argues the following: "[Logical egoism] is not merely a conceit but rather a kind of *logical principle*, which takes as dispensable the criterion of truth, to compare one's opinions with those of other men," Young, *Lectures on Logic*, 475 (emphasis altered).

58. Allen Wood interprets the third maxim along similar lines but emphasizes the need to "give systematic unity to our thoughts under common principles"; Allen Wood, *Kant's Ethical Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 303. It makes sense, however, to ask what is the ground principle of this systematizing effort. It seems that this is no other than the principle of autonomy and, hence, that what we are asked to do here is to strive consistently to think autonomously.

59. Kant makes a similar argument in the "Vienna Logic," which is considered to be contemporaneous with the first *Critique*. He argues that "If it does not happen that we lay our thoughts before universal human reason, then we have cause to call into question the validity of our judgements, because we do not wish to follow nature's wise precept that we test our truth on the judgements of others. It is wrong, accordingly for the state to forbid men to write books and to judge, e.g., about matters of religion. For then they are deprived of the only means that nature has given them, namely, testing their argument on the reason of others," in *Lectures on Logic*, 323–24.

60. J. S. Mill, *Utilitarianism, On Liberty*, *Essay on Bentham*, Mary Warnock (ed.) (Glasgow: Collins, 1979), 182.

61. Mill, *On Liberty*, 183.

62. Mill, *On Liberty*, 143.

63. Mill, *On Liberty*, 142–43.

64. "Complete liberty in contradicting and disproving our opinion is the very condition which justifies us in assuming its truth," Mill, *On Liberty*, 145.

65. Mill, *On Liberty*, 180.

66. An instance in which Kant reinforces an a priori point with pragmatic considerations—I use "pragmatic" here not in Kant's sense—is when he argues that the involvement of the "entire public" in its own enlightenment is desirable because those who set out on the solitary path of individual enlightenment are likely to face both difficulties and dangers that are better met in company with others, VIII:36, *WE* 55.

67. "Good name" is an alternative, free rendering of the German word *Ansehen*. Although Kemp Smith's translation as "authority" captures well Kant's meaning here, *Ansehen* also means "esteem," "regard," "reputation." In the passage cited, Kant plays on the word to make a contrast between the good reputation of a person and the good reputation of reason. In the latter case, good reputation is unconnected to personal authority; it depends rather on free debate.

68. In the *Critique of Judgement* Kant describes the *selbstdenken* maxim as "the maxim of a reason that is never passive," V:294, *CJ* 161.

69. In the "Orientation" essay, Kant specifies that these are the laws that reason "imposes on itself," VIII:145, *WO* 247.

70. Thomas Nagel, *The View from Nowhere* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 218ff.

71. In the section "What Is a Book?" in *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant defines the author as "one who *speaks* to the public in his own name" and a piece of writing as "a *discourse* to the public; that is, the author *speaks* publicly through the publisher. But the publisher speaks . . . not in his own name (for he would then pass himself off as the author), but in the name of the author," VI:289-90, *MM* 106.

72. Letter to Friedrich Schiller, 30 March 1795, Zweig, *Kant: Philosophical Correspondence*, 222.

73. See also the "Vienna Logic" in *Lectures on Logic*, 320.

74. See Mendelssohn, "Über die Freiheit, seine Meinung zu sagen," *Jubiläumsausgabe*, 123–24, see also, Möhsen, "Was ist zu thun zur Aufklärung der Mittbürger," in Keller, "Die Berliner Mittwochs-Gesellschaft," 75.

75. McCarthy, "Enlightenment and the Idea of Public Reason," 254. When in the *Critique of Judgement* Kant invokes the faculties of understanding and of imagination to justify our expectation of agreement in judgments of taste, he does not describe it as an objective criterion (let alone guarantee) but rather as the subjective grounds for the form of such judgments.

76. Letter to C. J. Kraus, 18 December 1784, in Hamann, *Briefewechsel*, 289–92. For an English translation, see Schmidt, *What Is Enlightenment?* 145–53. For Hamann's relation to the German Enlightenment, see James O'Flaherty, *The Quarrel of Reason with Itself: Essays on Hamann, Michaelis, Lessing, Nietzsche* (Columbia: Camden House, 1988), esp. 85–105 and 129–43.

77. Hamann, *Briefewechsel*, 290.

78. The word Hamann uses is "*Mauldiener*," "lip-servant."

79. Hamann, *Briefewechsel*, 291.

80. "In all cases, however, where the supreme legislation did nevertheless [i.e., despite counterrepresentations] adopt such measures, it would be permissible to pass general and public judgements upon them, but never to offer any verbal or active resistance," VIII:305, *TP* 85.

81. While there is a prima faciae case to be made about the "compromise" of "argue but obey" on Kantian grounds, as Schmidt for instance argues, we need still to address the issue of the authority of reason, which Schmidt does not discuss; see Schmidt, "What Enlightenment Was," 98–99. Joseph Knippenberg has made a strong case for Kant's pragmatic adjustment to different political circumstances that remains consistent with his conception of the role of the critical philosopher as an agent for reform; see Joseph M. Knippenberg, "The Politics of Kant's Philosophy" in Ronald Beiner and William James Booth (eds.), *Kant and Political Philosophy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 155–72.

Chapter 3. Culture as a Historical Project

1. After a long period of relative neglect, Kant's writings on history have increasingly been the subject of considerable attention. The first extensive discussion was by Klaus Weyand, *Kants Geschichtsphilosophie: Ihre Entwicklung und ihr Verhältnis zur Aufklärung* (Köln: Universitäts-Verlag, 1963). The religious significance of Kant's historical thinking has been emphasized by Michael Despland in *Kant on History and Religion* (London and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1973), while a strongly political reading is given by William A. Galston in *Kant and the Problem of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975). An attempt to integrate Kant's writings on history within his larger system is to be found in Otfried Höffe, *Immanuel Kant* (München: Beck, 1983), and especially Yirmiyahu Yovel, *Kant and the Philosophy of History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1980). However, both Yovel and Höffe restrict the significance of Kant's historical thought to its political dimension. This position has been challenged in a number of more recent studies that argue for the coherence of the notion of moral progress within Kantian ethics. See Harry van der Linden, *Kantian Ethics and Socialism* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1988); Monique Castillo, *Kant et l'avenir de la culture* (Paris: PUF, 1990); Sidney Axinn, *The Logic of Hope: Extensions of Kant's View of Religion* (Amsterdam, Atlanta Georgia: Rodopi, 1994); and Pauline Kleingeld, *Fortschritt und Vernunft: Zur Geschichtsphilosophie Kants* (Würzburg: Königshausen

and Neumann, 1995); see also Kleingeld, "Kant, History, and the Idea of Moral Development," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 16, 1 (1999), 59–80.

2. G. E. Lessing, "Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts," in H. G. Göpfert (ed.), *Werke*, vol. 8 (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1979), 489–510. I discuss Lessing's argument in the next chapter, section 5.

3. Moses Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem, oder über die Macht der Judentum* (1783), *Gesammelte Schriften Jubiläumausgabe*, F. Bamberger et al. (eds.), vol. 8 (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Friedrich Frommann (formerly: Günther Holzboog), 1972), 99–204, here 162.

4. I am concerned here with the German model of philosophical history; the French "*histoire philosophique*," as practiced by Montesquieu or Voltaire, is more explicitly tied to particular historical periods and events.

5. Arthur C. Danto, *Analytical Philosophy of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 1–16.

6. See Karl Löwith, *Meaning in History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), esp. 191–203, and Karl Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957), esp. 76–83. Löwith argues that philosophical history represents an attempt to recapture within a secular context the promise of salvation held by Christian teleological views of creation. Popper, by contrast, questions the soundness of the method of philosophical history, arguing that its claims raised are unverifiable. More recently, philosophical history has been criticized from a postmodernist perspective where it is seen as exemplifying the modern search for meaningful metanarratives or for foundations for our beliefs. See J-F. Lyotard, *La condition postmoderne; rapport sur le savoir* (Paris: Minuit, 1979).

7. Herder, *Ideen*, in Bernard Suphan (ed.), *Sämmtliche Werke*, vol. 13 (Berlin: Weidmannische Verlag, 1887), 18.

8. Herder, *Ideen*, 68.

9. Herder, *Ideen*, 142ff.

10. Yovel, *Kant and the Philosophy of History*, 140 and 127. Yovel's frequent references to the "cunning of nature" suggest an already Hegelianized reading of Kant's idea of the "plan of nature.' This expression was originally coined by Eric Weil to suggest a similarity with Hegel's "cunning of reason" (*List der Vernunft*), see, Eric Weil, *Problèmes Kantiens* (Paris: PUF, 1970), 130.

11. Yovel, *Kant and the Philosophy of History*, 277.

12. Yovel concludes that "from a wider systematic viewpoint the cunning of nature is not fully integrated in the rest of the system . . . and its very occurrence remains inexplicable," ibid.

13. The parallel composition of these texts has been shown by Emil Fackenheim in "Kant's Concept of History," *Kant-Studien* 48 (1956–57), 381–98.

14. Rudolf A. Makkreel, *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant: The Hermeneutical Import of the "Critique of Judgement"* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 130–53. See also Makkreel's "Differentiating Dogmatic, Regulative, and Reflective Approaches to History," in Hoke Robinson (ed.), *Proceedings of the Eighth International Kant Congress* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1995), 123–38. Makkreel offers the most detailed presentation of this view. However, similar arguments are to be found in Delbos, *La philosophie pratique de Kant*, 12, and Despland, *Kant on History*, 74. Henry E. Allison also appears to offer cautious support for this thesis in his *Kant's Theory of Taste: A Reading of the Critique of Aesthetic Judgement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 205ff.

15. Makkreel, *Imagination and Interpretation*, 136. Makkreel introduces his discussion of "Idea for a Universal History" and "Conjectural Beginnings" by arguing that the "first still involves a speculative use of teleology; the second a mere imaginary, conjectural use," 131.

16. Allen Wood, *Kant's Ethical Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 208. Wood claims that the idea of natural development, which, on his account, underpins Kant's conception of historical progress, must be understood in terms of "principles of reflective judgement which are only regulative in character," *ibid.* Wood's amalgamation of two distinctive Kantian doctrines, concerning reflective and regulative use of ideas, adds a further strain on his naturalistic interpretation. An earlier and more compelling account can be found in Wood's "Unsociable Sociability: The Anthropological Basis of Kantian Ethics," *Philosophical Topics* 19 (1991), 325–51; see also Kleingeld, *Fortschritt und Vernunft*, 122ff. The interpretation I pursue here draws on Wood's earlier views about the role of "anthropological assumptions" in Kant's thought, but stops short of attributing any determining force to them. I argue that they are best seen as forming the context for what Kant calls the philosophical "attempt" at interpreting world history.

17. See, too, VI:230f, *MM* 56f.

18. See Weil, *Problèmes Kantiens*, 130; Despland, *Kant on History*, 50 (although in his summing up of Kant's conception of history he apparently revises this view, 81); Yovel, *Kant and the Philosophy of History*, 164; van der Linden, *Kantian Ethics*, 158, 190; Paul Guyer, "Nature, Morality and the Possibility of Peace," in Robinson, *Proceedings*, 51–70.

19. Kleingeld, "Kant, History, and the Idea of Moral Development," 75.

20. See Kleingeld's detailed discussion on this, especially her analysis of the "Character of the Species" in the *Anthropology*, VII:322f, *Anthropology* 183f.

21. See also VIII:112, *CB* 223.

22. Kant's argument about the use of teleological judgment in constructing a system of natural laws is rather obscure; see Paul Guyer, in *Kant and the Claims of Taste* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 41. See also Michael Friedman's discussion of "reflective judgement," in *Kant and the Exact Sciences* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 242–54. For a more sympathetic approach, see Rolf-Peter Horstmann, "Why Must There Be a Transcendental Deduction in Kant's *Critique of Judgement*," in *Kant's Transcendental Deductions*: *The Three "Critiques" and the "Opus postumum,"* Eckart Förster (ed.) (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), 157–76.

23. For a clear and historically informed discussion of Kant's agent-based view of teleology, see Otto Lemp, *Das Problem der Theodicee in der Philosophie und Literatur des 18: Jahrhunderts bis auf Kant und Schiller* (Leipzig: Dürr'sche Buchhandlung, 1910), 352–53. See also Yovel, *Kant and the Philosophy of History*, 173–77. More recently, the case for an open-ended or a nondeterministic view of culture has been made by Stuart Hampshire, "The Social Spirit of Mankind," in Förster, *Kant's Transcendental Deductions*, 145–56.

24. Hampshire, "The Social Spirit of Mankind," 150.

25. Relevant here is Kant's distinction between "sociable" interaction, which is characterized by a "sharing in pleasure" and "barbaric" interaction that is characterized by competitiveness alone, see VII:240, *Anthropology* 108. The role of discipline is further elaborated in the *Lectures on Paedagogy*, IX:449ff. In *Religion*, Kant argues that there is a fine balance to be struck between "the inclination to acquire worth in the opinion of others," and the "unjustifiable craving to win [superiority] for oneself over others" (VI:27, *Religion* 22). While rivalry can be used as a "spur to culture," it can also lead to the development of "vices of culture" (ibid.).

26. In the appendix entitled "On the Virtues of Social Intercourse (*virtutes homileticae*)," Kant argues that "It is a duty to oneself as well as to others not to isolate oneself (*separatistam agere*) but to use one's moral perfection in social intercourse (*officium commercii, sociabilitas*) . . . to cultivate a disposition of reciprocity—agreeableness, tolerance, mutual love and respect (affability and propriety, *humanitas aesthetica et decorum*) and so to associate the graces with virtue. To

bring this about is itself a duty of virtue," VI: 473–74, *MM* 265. I discuss this further in the next section and again in the context of Schiller's criticisms of Kant's rigorism in chapter 4.

27. Hampshire, "The Social Spirit of Mankind," 151.

28. Monique Castillo, *Kant et l'avenir de la culture*, 228–35. See also 152–63.

29. Allison, *Kant's Theory of Taste*, 343–44.

30. Paul Stern, "The Problem of History and Temporality in Kantian Ethics," *Review of Metaphysics* 30 (1986), 28.

31. The "rigorist" approach is taken by Fackenheim, Yovel, *Kant and the Philosophy of History*, 189, and van der Linden, *Kantian Ethics*, 158. The gradualist approach in Despland, *Kant on History*, 87–89; see also Thomas Auxter, *Kant's Moral Teleology* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1982), and Susan Meld Shell, *The Embodiment of Reason: Kant on Spirit, Generation, and Community* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 235–59.

32. Hampshire, "The Social Spirit of Mankind," 150.

33. Despland, *Kant on History*, 88.

34. A case can be made also for the contribution of political structures to moral development on the grounds that, as van der Linden argues, "one can expect autonomy to arise only in a situation in which external freedom is guaranteed by the law," van der Linden, *Kantian Ethics and Socialism,* 154. See also VIII:366, *PP* 113, and VI:131, *Religion* 87 and the remarks on the education of humanity in VII:328–29, *Anthropology* 189.

35. Fackenheim, "Kant's Concept of History," 388.

36. "History and Physiography of the Most Remarkable Cases of Earthquake which towards the End of the Year 1755 Shook a Great Part of the Earth" (1756), in Stephen Palmquist, ed., *Four Neglected Essays by I. Kant* (Hong Kong: Philopsychy, 1994), 2–30.

37. Allison argues that "the sublime provides us with a sense of our allegedly 'supersensible' nature and vocation and, therefore, of our independence of nature. The latter is certainly crucial for Kant's understanding of morality, reflecting what I term the 'Stoic side' of his moral theory; but the sense of purposiveness that it involves can no longer be readily viewed as that of nature, except in an indirect and Pickwickian sense," Allison, *Kant's Theory of Taste*, 9.

38. H. J. Paton, *The Categorical Imperative* (New York: Harper 1967), 192.

39. The difficulties surrounding the "perfect good" as a practical object of the will have led some interpreters to propose an understanding of moral teleology that dispenses with it and focuses instead on

"this-worldly moral planning," see Auxter, *Kant's Moral Teleology*, 10f, and 82f. For an alternative interpretation see John R. Silber, "Kant's Conception of the Highest Good as Immanent and Transcendent," in *Philosophical Review* 68 (1959), 469–92.

40. The argument for sociability between nations is based on culture and commerce: "as culture grows and men gradually move towards greater agreement over their principles, they lead to mutual understanding and peace. [. . .] For the spirit of commerce sooner or later takes hold of every people, and it cannot exist side by side with war" (VIII:367–68, *PP*114). A more austere reconstruction that connects national and international justice can be found in Hans Saner, "Die negativen Bedingungen des Friedens," in O. Höffe (ed.), *Immanuel Kant: Zum ewigen Frieden* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1995), 43–68, and Pierre Laberge "Von der Garantie des ewigen Friedens," ibid., 149–70.

41. That Kant has in his sights history as a whole is important when it comes to deal with the thorny problem of how evil acts can be justified by appeal to a future good; see Susan Meld Shell, *The Embodiment of Reason*, 161–83, van der Linden, *Kantian Ethics*, 116ff. From the account we have given so far no single act can be *justified* by reference to future furtherance of particular rational goals.

42. Arguably, Kant believes that unless we entertain a certain view of nature, and hence of history, not even a supernatural agency could help with the realization of our rational ends. In "Perpetual Peace," he suggests that *no* theodicy could make good the fact that "such a race of corrupt beings could have been created on earth at all" (VIII:380, *PP* 124).

43. Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, 27–54.

44. Despair is not just a psychological but also an epistemic condition: Thomas Abbt, one of the so-called popular philosophers develops the implications of despair in "Zweifel über die Bestimmung des Menschen" (Doubts over the vocation of man) of 1763, in Mendelssohn, *Jubiläumsausgabe*, VI:1, 7–18.

45. In refusing to appeal to the idea that the universe is in fact rationally arranged, Kant rejects the basic claim of theodicy. While this is not surprising given his critical philosophical commitments, it is revealing that in his early essay on philosophical optimism, "Examination of Certain Observations on Optimism" (1759), II:29–35, he offers a sympathetic account of theodicy and attacks its critics. The wider context for this essay was provided by an ongoing controversy concerning theodicy that centered not so much on Leibniz's theory but on a version of it popularized by Alexander Pope's poem "An Essay on

Man" (1733–1734). The line "whatever is, is right" became identified as the motto of the optimistic position and provided the basis for an essay competition organized by the Royal Academy of Berlin in 1755; see "Pope ein Metaphysiker!" coauthored by Lessing and Mendelssohn, in Mendelssohn, *Jubiläumausgabe*, 2, 43–80. The terrible earthquake that devastated Lisbon that same year gave a grim topicality to discussions on the plausibility of theodicy and philosophical optimism. Kant's early essay can be seen as responding precisely to this challenge by focusing on the moral implications of embracing a pessimistic perspective. His essay on "Earthquakes," mentioned earlier, makes clear the moral interest in our contemplation of natural destruction (a position that is further reinforced in "On the Failure of All Attempted Philosophical Theodicies," see Despland, *Kant on History*, 289).

Chapter 4. Nature and the Criticism of Culture

1. Schiller was the editor of the journal, which published the work in three installments, in the issues of January, February, and June of 1795.

2. J. G. Herder, *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschenheit*, Bernard Suphan (ed.), Sämmtliche *Werke* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1891), vol. 5, 516.

3. Letter to J. F. Hartknoch, August 1773, J. G. Herder *Briefe*, Karl-Heinz Hahn ed. (Weimar: Goethe-Schiller-Archiv, 1977), vol. 1.

4. The argument is made in Hampshire: "The point of culture . . . is to constitute from the biological unit, the animal species, a new unity, which is humanity, the humanity that is held together through communication in art and in literature and in aesthetic enjoyment generally," "The Social Sprit of Mankind," 151.

5. Apart from Kant, Schiller's philosophical studies extended to Burke and Wolff and also to Diderot and Rousseau; see in particular his letter to Körner, 11 January 1793, *NA* XXVI:174. For the development of Schiller's ideas, see Lesley Sharpe, *Friedrich Schiller: Drama, Thought and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). Detailed analyses of the *Aesthetic Letters* can be found in R. D. Miller, *A Study of Schiller's Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man* (Harrogate: Duchy, 1986) and S. S. Kerry, *Schiller's Writings on Aesthetics* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1961). See also Wolfgang Düsing, *Friedrich Schiller: Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen in einer Reihe von Briefen; Text, Materialien, Kommentar* (München: Carl Hanser, 1981).

6. Schiller's correspondence with Körner contains fragments of a work, which Schiller planned but never completed, with the title "Kallias, or On Beauty." This series of letters to Körner, from 25 January to 28 February 1793, form the so-called *Kallias* fragment; *NA* XXVI:175–229. The essay *On Grace and Dignity* appeared first in 1793 in the journal *Neue Thalia*. It was republished later in the same year in book form. Schiller's correspondence with the Duke of Schleswig-Holstein-Augustengurg began on 9 February 1793 (*NA* 26:183–87). Although the original letters were destroyed in a fire, it has been possible to trace six copies. The last surviving letter is dated from December of the same year (*NA* 26:337–38). Details regarding the manuscript and Schiller's relation to the duke, who had granted him a pension in order to enable him to pursue his philosophical work, are to be found in Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L. A. Willoughby, "Appendix I," in *AE*, 334–37.

7. An account of the "romantic school," with special focus on the political thought of Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis, can be found in Beiser, *Enlightenment, Revolution, and Romanticism*, 222ff.

8. Herder, *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte* in Suphan (ed.) Sämmtliche werke, vol. 5, 553–57.

9. See Schiller's letter to Augustenburg of 13 July 1993: "The attempt of the French people to establish its sacred human rights and to obtain through its struggle political freedom has demonstrated only its powerlessness and unworthiness and not only this unhappy people but with it a substantial part of Europe and of the whole century has sunk into barbarism and slavery" (*NA* XXVI:262).

10. "On the True Effects of the Properly Run Stage" appeared in 1784 (*NA* 20: 87–100). "On Bürger's Poetry" (*NA* 22:245–64) is a review of Gottfried August Bürger's poetry, which appeared in the *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* in 1791. For a discussion of the latter see Jason Gaiger, "Schiller's Theory of Landscape Depiction," in *Journal of the History of Ideas* (2000), 115–32.

11. For an analysis of Schiller's rhetorical strategy in the *Aesthetic Letters*, see Todd Curtis Kontje, *Constructing Reality: A Rhetorical Analysis of Friedrich Schiller's Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man* (New York, Berne, Frankfurt am Main, Paris: Peter Lang, 1987), 49–58.

12. Eva Schaper, "Schiller's Kant: A Chapter in the History of Creative Misunderstanding," in *Studies in Kant's Aesthetics* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1979), 100.

13. Schiller considers the *Critique of Judgement* only as a starting point for a new aesthetic. In his very first letter to Christian von

Augustenburg, he writes: "In his critique of aesthetic judgement, Kant, as I certainly need not tell you my Prince, has begun to apply the principles of critical philosophy also to the topic of taste and to prepare the foundations for a new theory of art, which were hitherto unavailable" (*NA* XXVI: 82).

14. Although Kant presents it as a variety of reflective judgment, aesthetic judgment is shown to be quite unique insofar as it is logically singular, that is, it is a judgment that depends on the empirical presentation of the object and entails nothing about other objects of the same kind, and yet lays claim to general validity, or "subjective universality" (V:214, *CJ* 57).

15. In the *Kallias* Schiller seeks to establish a systematic link between aesthetics and morality through a "deduction" of morality out of beauty. This suggests an already *moralized* reading of Kant's aesthetics. See, for instance: "It is certain that no mortal man has spoken a greatest word than Kant, which is also the content of his entire philosophy: 'determine yourself by yourself.' In the theoretical philosophy this gives: 'nature stands under the laws of he understanding.' This great idea of self-determination radiates back to us from certain natural appearances, and these we call *beauty*" (*NA* XXVI:191).

16. Kant goes on to say that it is the latter—namely, freedom presented a subject to a law-governed task—that gives us the "genuine structure" (*echte Beschaffenheit*) of human morality, where reason must "inflict force" (*Gewalt antun*) on sensibility (V:268, *CJ* 128, translation altered). It is precisely this view of morality and of freedom that Schiller sets out to challenge.

17. In *Grace and Dignity*, while praising the "immortal author of the *Critique*" for articulating the principles of rational agency, Schiller further comments that the way in which these principles are presented suggest that "inclination (*Neigung*) is a very ambiguous companion of the moral feeling and pleasure a dubious adjunct to moral determinations" (*NA* XX:283). Schiller seeks by contrast to argue for the possibility of a morality that is "the result of the conjoint effect of both principles [i.e., reason and sensuous nature]" (*NA* XX:284)

18. This criticism is closely allied with Schiller's empiricist psychology that influences his analysis of the model of the drives (see *NA* XX:315–16, *AE* 17, and *NA* XX:330–32, *AE* 49-53). For an account of the influence of Schiller's early medical training on his discussion of the drives, see the introduction in K. Dewhurst and N. Reeves (eds.), *Friedrich Schiller: Medicine, Psychology, Literature* (Oxford: Sandford, 1978).

19. Contemporary debates have focused on the problematic character of Kant's claim that we act out of *respect* for the moral law. It has

been suggested that the notion of respect fails adequately to explain our motivation for following the moral law. Paul Guyer discusses this difficulty and provides an attempted solution involving an unorthodox interpretation of Kant's conception of freedom, in "Kant's Morality of Law and Morality of Freedom," in *Kant and Critique: New Essays in Honour of W. H. Werkmeister*, R. M. Dancy (ed.) (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1993), 43–90. Many philosophers have recently sought to address the difficulties that arise from narrowly deontological interpretations by reconstructing the Kantian account so as to include a richer notion of the good than Kant seems to allow. The most sustained attempt has been offered by Barbara Herman in *The Practice of Moral Judgement* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard University Press, 1993), see, esp. "Leaving Deontology Behind," 208–40. See also Robert B. Louden, "Kant's Virtue Ethics," in *Philosophy* 61 (1986), 473–89, K. Simmons, "Kant on Moral Worth," in *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 6 (1989), 85–100, and Christine Korsgaard, *The Sources of Normativity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

20. The view of Kant's ethics as a pure deontology with no concern for virtue has influenced a number of authors, who have presented what are now classical objections to this aspect of Kant's moral philosophy. Peter Winch insists upon the impossibility of applying Kantian rules of action and criticizes the unattractive character of the moral ideal Kant presents; see Peter Winch, "The Universalizability of Moral Judgements" and "Moral Integrity," in *Ethics and Action* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), 151–70 and 171–92. Among the numerous vindications of the importance of character and of virtue, see Bernard Williams, "Persons, Character, and Morality," Amélie Rorty (ed.), *The Identities of Persons* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 197–216, reprinted in *Moral Luck: Philosophical Papers 1973–1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 1–19. See also Philippa Foot, *Virtues Vices and Other Essays in Moral Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978), 1–18; John McDowell, "Virtue and Reason," *The Monist* 62 (1979), 331–50; Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, second edition (London: Duckworth, 1985), esp. 43–46.

21. An excellent discussion of Schiller's criticisms that focuses on the role of moral feeling in Kant's moral theory can be found in Gerold Prauss, *Kant: Über Freiheit als Autonomie* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1983), 240–308. See also Henry Allison's "The Classical Objections," in *Kant's Theory of Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 180–98. For a more thorough and sympathetic

analysis of Schiller's argument, see Gauthier, "Schiller's Critique of Kant's Moral Psychology."

22. Kant's principal discussion of moral happiness and virtue is to be found in the second part of the *Metaphysics of Morals*, "The Doctrine of Virtue" (see esp. the preface, V:375–78, *MM* 181–84). In the "Doctrine of Virtue," he goes as far as to claim that "to associate graces with virtue . . . is itself a duty of virtue" (V:473, *MM* 265). The topic is clearly important to him for he returns to it in both his occasional essays and systematic works (see VIII:141, *WO* 243n., and VI:50, *Religion* 45). For a detailed account of moral feeling and of its various expressions, agreeable or otherwise, see John Silber's introduction to the English translation of *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*: "The Ethical Significance of Kant's Religion," lxxix–cxxxiv, and esp. cvi–cxi. Also important in this context is Silber's argument that Kant holds a heterogeneous conception of the good from "The Moral Good and the Natural Good in Kant's Ethics," *Review of Metaphysics* 36 (1982), 397–437. This article develops a thesis Silber had already presented in "The Copernican Revolution in Ethics: The Good Reexamined," *Kant-Studien* 51 (1959–60), 85–101.

23. See, for instance, V:154–57, *CPrR* 158–61; VIII:286–89, *TP* 71–72, 89; VI:47–49, *Religion* 42–44. An analysis of the systematic place of the notion of "moral character" in Kant's work can be found in G. Felicitas Munzel, *Kant's Conception of Moral Character* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

24. Schiller states, rather hyperbolically, that if true freedom were established as the basis of government, he would readily bid the "Muses farewell"; see *NA* XXVI:261–62.

25. Schiller's description of the role of art here is reminiscent of his earlier treatment of the role of the artist as prophet and instructor of philosophical truths. This idea is also expressed in his poem "The Artists," published in 1789, in which he describes the ennobling character of art. On reading a first draft of the poem, Schiller's mentor, Christoph Martin Wieland, criticized him for making art subservient to morality and philosophy. Schiller's response was to seek to define more clearly the visionary role of artists; see Letter to Körner, 9 February 1989, *NA* XXV:199–201.

26. In his psychological model of the drives, Schiller seeks to incorporate elements of Kant's analysis of the requirements for the acquisition of empirical knowledge from the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Kant argues that empirical knowledge is, properly speaking, the product of a synthesis: it requires both the activity of the intellect and the receptivity of the senses. The idea that our intellect spontaneously

orders what is given to our senses in experience provides the starting point for Schiller's account of the different functions fulfilled by the formative and the sensuous drives.

27. Schiller initially develops this objection in the *Kallias* fragment, where he argues that Kant focuses on what happens in the subject's mind, ignoring the purely sensory encounter with the beautiful object (*NA* XXVI:175–77). To address the problems he identifies with Kant's "subjective-rational" account, he seeks to show that there is an "objective" conception of beauty, that "beauty is an objective quality" or that "something must be encountered in the object itself, which makes possible the employment of this principle [i.e., of beauty]" (*NA* XXVI:190). Eva Schaper argues that Schiller's criticism is due to a "misunderstanding" on his part; see Schaper, "Schiller's Kant," 101. As I suggest earlier, this misunderstanding may be due to Schiller's already moralized reading of Kant's aesthetics (see note 15). Dieter Henrich discusses the philosophical implications of Schiller's search for objective beauty in "Beauty and Freedom: Schiller's Struggle with Kant's Aesthetics," in *Essays in Kant's Aesthetics*, Ted Cohen and Paul Guyer (eds.) (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 237–57.

28. For an account of the ambiguities of Schiller's description of the aesthetic condition, see Gauthier, "Schiller's Critique of Kant's Moral Psychology," pp. 532–33. See also Anthony Savile, *Aesthetic Reconstructions: The Seminal Writings of Lessing, Kant and Schiller* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), 195–254.

29. The idea of harmonious cooperation developed especially in the Fifteenth Letter (*NA* XX:356, *AE* 103) presupposes a different conception of the soul to the quasi-Platonic one that requires that each drive be turned to its proper object.

30. I use "condition" to translate *Zustand*, in order to distinguish it from the aesthetic state, *Staat*, meaning a political organization. This "nought" can perhaps be further explained by reference to Schiller's characterization of the aesthetic condition as a "middle condition" in the Eighteenth Letter (*NA* XX:366, *AE* 123), which suggests that through beauty we achieve an Aristotelean mean between activity and passivity, form and matter.

31. Schiller argues that if we "surrender to the enjoyment of genuine beauty, we are at such a moment master in equal degree of our passive and of our active powers," a condition he describes as a "lofty equanimity and freedom of the spirit" (*NA* XX:380, *AE* 153). For a brief but illuminating account of Schiller's "aesthetic condition," see Michael Podro, *The Manifold of Perception* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 53–60.

32. See: "To watch over these, and secure for each of these two drives its proper frontiers, is the task of culture" (*NA* XX:348–49, *AE* 87).

33. We encounter here a problem similar to that we encountered earlier with Rousseau's political theory. Both authors believe that a successful polity in which the freedom of all is respected depends on changing the character of the citizens. Thus, although this intervention upon human nature itself is described very differently by Rousseau and by Schiller, the outcome is similar in both cases: an state of freedom without any of the outward signs of the citizens exercising their freedom, such as political conflict, dissent, or criticism.

34. In some respects, Schiller's description of the aesthetic state is reminiscent of Kant's "kingdom of ends" in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. Lesley Sharpe points out the elitist aspects of Schiller's political model; see Sharpe, *Schiller*, 159–69.

35. The problem is not with the ideality of Schiller's *Vernunftbegriff*, but with the way in which it is used to define an idealized experience that may or may not correspond to actual aesthetic experiences. See also: "Since in actuality no purely aesthetic effect is ever to be met with . . . the excellence of a work of art can never consist in anything more than a high approximation to that ideal of aesthetic purity" (*NA* XX:380, *AE* 153).

36. The first part of *The Education of Humankind* appeared in 1777, in the fourth of Lessing's *Wolfenbütler Beiträge*. It was first published in full and as an independent piece posthumously, in 1790 in Berlin. See, G. E. Lessing, "Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts," in H. G. Göpfert (ed.), *Werke*, vol. 8 (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1979), 489–510.

37. Lessing, "Erziehung," 508.

38. Lessing, ibid.

39. In the opening paragraphs, Lessing suggests that what education is for the individual, revelation is for the entire species. He then proceeds to argue that "education does not give to man anything which he would not have been able to find out by himself. Education offers him what he would have discovered by himself, except faster and easier. Similarly, humanity does not learn through revelation anything which human reason would not have discovered if left by itself. Rather, revelation presents humanity with the most important of those insights, only earlier." Lessing, "Erziehung," 490. On Lessing's religious thought, see Henry Allison, *Lessing and the Enlightenment: His Philosophy of Religion and Its Relation to Eighteenth-Century Thought* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1966).

Chapter 5. Culture after Enlightenment

1. "-quanta sub nocte iacebat/Nostra dies!" from Lucanus, *Pharsalia* IX, 13ff, in Herder, *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte*, in Suphan (ed.), SämmtlicheWerke, vol. 5, 586.

2. Herder, *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte*, 583.

3. Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, John Cumming (trans.) (London and New York: Verso, 1986), xiii.

4. Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 6, 24, and 42.

5. Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, xii.

6. Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, xiii.

7. Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, xvi.

8. Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, xi.

9. Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, x.

10. Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, xi.

11. Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, ix.

12. Max Horkheimer, "The Social Function of Philosophy," in *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science*, vol. 8/1939, Institute of Social Research, New York, facsimile edition (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1980), 331. The systematic criticism of contemporary society is a key theme of "critical theory," which at its beginnings at least was bound up with the theoretical program of the Institute for Social Research founded in Frankfurt in the early 1920s. The term "critical theory" was first defined in contrast to "traditional theory" in Horkheimer's "Traditionelle und kritische Theorie" (Traditional and critical theory), of 1937, reprinted in Max Horkheimer, *Traditionelle und kritische Theorie: Fünf Aufsätze* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1992). See also, Herbert Marcuse, "Philosophy and Critical Theory," also of 1937, reprinted in H. Marcuse, *Negations: Essays in Critical Theory*, trans., Jeremy J. Shapiro (London: Free Association Books, 1988), 134–58. For a comprehensive history of the Frankfurt School, see Rolf Wiggershaus, *The Frankfurt School: Its History, Theory, and Political Significance*, Michael Robertson (trans.) (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994). See also Susan Buck-Morss, *The Origin of Negative Dialectics: Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin and the Frankfurt Institute* (New York: Macmillan, 1977), and Eugene Lunn, *Marxism and Modernism: An Historical Study of Lukàcs, Brecht, Benjamin and Adorno* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1982).

13. Horkheimer, "Social Function," 332.

14. Cf. "The more passionately thought denies its conditionality for the sake of the unconditional, the more unconsciously, and so calamitously, it is delivered up to the world. Even its own impossibility it must at last comprehend for the sake of the possible," *Minima Moralia*, 247. The aporetic character of Adorno and Horkheimer's criticism of the Enlightenment is discussed in Seyla Benhabib, "Modernity and the Aporias of Critical Theory," *Telos* 49 (1981), 39–59. See also Gillian Rose's study, *The Melancholy Science: An Introduction to the Thought of Theodor W. Adorno* (London: Macmillan, 1978). For a critical perspective on Horkheimer and Adorno's position articulated from within critical theory, see Jürgen Habermas, "The Entwinement of Myth and Enlightenment: Re-Reading *Dialectic of Enlightenment*," Thomas Y. Levin (trans.), *New German Critique* 26 (1982), 13–30, (the essay appears also in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, 106–30). See too Albrecht Wellmer, *The Persistence of Modernity: Essays on Aesthetics, Ethics and Postmodernism*, trans. David Midgley (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991, originally published in German in 1985), 59–64, and Herbert Schnädelbach, "Die Aktualität der 'Dialektik der Aufklärung'" in *Zur Rehabilitierung des animal rationale; Vorträge und Abhandlungen 2* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1992), 231–50.

15. Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 225.

16. Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, xvi.

17. Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 3, emphasis added.

18. Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, xvi, emphasis added.

19. Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, vol. 2, Günther Roth and Claus Wittig (eds.) (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 835.

20. Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 120. See also Adorno's essay "Culture and Administration," Wes Blomster (trans.), *Telos* 37 (1978), 93–111, and Horkheimer's essay "On the Concept of Philosophy," in *The Eclipse of Reason* (New York: Seabury, 1974, originally published in 1947), 162–87.

21. Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 131.

22. Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 54. See also Horkheimer, "The Revolt of Nature," in *Eclipse of Reason*, 93. See also, Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, E. B. Ashton (trans.) (London: Routledge, 1990, originally published in 1966), 179–80. Although Adorno and Horkheimer's criticism opens the path for the articulation of an ecological position, their principal concern remains the human and social cost of the domination of nature. For more recent criticisms

with a more explicit ecological perspective, see Gernot Böhme, *Für eine ökologische Naturästhetik* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1989).

23. Albrecht Wellmer, *The Critical Theory of Society* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971), 132.

24. Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, ix.

25. Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, ix.

26. Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 6.

27. Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 13.

28. Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 83, see also 81f.

29. Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 119.

30. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison*, Alan Sheridan (trans.) (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991), 7.

31. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 16.

32. Cf.: "The history that bears and determines us has the form of a war rather than that of a language: relations of power, not of meaning," in Paul Rabinow (ed.), *The Foucault Reader* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987), 56.

33. Rabinow, *Foucault Reader*, 68.

34. Foucault "The Subject and Power," published as an afterword to Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow's *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 208.

35. Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, A. M. Sheridan Smith (trans.) (London: Tavistock, 1973), xix.

36. Foucault, "What Is Critique?" Kevin Paul Geiman (trans.), in Schmidt (ed.), *What Is Enlightenment*? 396.

37. Rabinow, *Foucault Reader*, 77.

38. *Discipline and Punish* met with considerable criticism by some historians who argued that Foucault's use of the source material was flawed and onesided. For a summary of those criticisms see chapter 7 in J. G. Merquior, *Foucault* (London: Fontana Press, 1985).

39. Michelle Perrot (ed.), *L'impossible prison: recherches sur le système pénitentiaire au XIXème siècle* (Paris: Seuil, 1980), 33.

40. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 31, emphasis added.

41. Donald F. Bouchard (ed.), *Michel Foucault, Language, Counter-memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1977), 146.

42. Foucault, "Questions of Method: An Interview with Michel Foucault," in *Ideology and Consciousness* 8 (1981), 13.

43. Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), xv; see also, "Post-

modernist Bourgeois Liberalism," 61 and 199, and "The World Well Lost," in *The Consequences of Pragmatism* (Cambridge, Mass.: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 3–18.

44. MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 277.

45. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 6.

46. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 33.

47. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 77, also 84f.

48. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 89.

49. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 131.

50. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 135, also 169, 305.

51. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 9.

52. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 79, also 82, 92, 101. Foucault describes a similar process with respect to sexuality in *History of Sexuality vol. 1, An Introduction*, Robert Hurley (trans.) (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990), esp. 139f.

53. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 92.

54. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 205.

55. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 205.

56. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 209.

57. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 146.

58. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 305.

59. Rabinow, *The Foucault Reader*, 249. See also, "What Is Enlightenment?" in Rabinow, *The Foucault Reader*, 32–50, and "What Is Critique?" in Schmidt, *What Is Enlightenment*? 382–98.

60. Rabinow, *Foucault Reader*, 249, and 32, also Schmidt, *What Is Enlightenment*? 392.

61. Rabinow, *Foucault Reader*, 49-50. Cf.: "Critique will be the art of voluntary inservitude, of reflective indocility," Schmidt, *What Is Enlightenment*? 386.

62. Rabinow, *Foucault Reader*, 49 and 249.

63. Gilligan's work has been influential both in raising the issue of care with respect to feminist issues and as a criticism of abstract universalist ethics. Responding to the latter challenge, Seyla Benhabib develops a model of intersubjective practice, which she terms "interactive universalism," in "The Generalized and the Concrete Other," in Seyla Benhabib and Drucilla Cornell (eds.), *Feminism as Critique* (Cambridge: Polity, and Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), 77–95. For a feminist defense of a care model of ethics, see Nel Noddings, *Caring: A Feminist Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 1984). The issue of care and of a care-based ethics has also received much *critical* attention in feminist literature, with several authors addressing the diverse and competing

political and social aspects of an ethics of care. See, for instance, Sandra Lee Bartsky *Feminism and Dominance: Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), and Dietmut Bubeck, *Care, Gender, and Justice* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995).

64. Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*, new edition (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), ix.

65. Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, 71.

66. Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, xix.

67. Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, 160.

68. Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, 100.

69. Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, 100, 151f.

70. Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, 167, also 151–74.

71. Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, xvi.

72. Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, 31.

73. Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, 31, emphasis added.

74. Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, 18.

75. Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, 6f, 18, 151f. Gilligan cites Piaget's experiments and also Freud's claim that women are incapable of developing a sense of justice because as girls they are unable to experience castration anxiety, an argument that depends on assumptions derived from a theory specifically designed to describe the psychosexual development of the male child.

76. Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, 7.

77. See Pateman, *Sexual Contract*, 227. See also Cavarero, "Equality and Sexual Difference," in Bock and James (eds.), *Beyond Equality and Difference* (London: Routledge, 1992), 39–40. The theme of the nonrecognition of female experience is also characteristic of certain strands of French feminism, see Luce Irigaray, *Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un* (Paris: Minuit, 1977), esp. 23–32, and 158–61.

78. See Pateman, *Sexual Contract*, 41f, 222f and "Women and Consent," and "Feminist Critiques of the Public/Private Dichotomy," in *The Disorder of Women*, (Oxford: Polity Press, 1989), 71–79 and 118–40. For a criticism of the covert masculinity of liberal ideals of equality and rationality, see Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Private Man, Public Woman: Women in Social and Political Thought* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981) and Susan Moller Okin, *Justice, Gender, and the Family* (New York: Basic, 1989). Similar criticisms have been raised outside the area of political philosophy. See, for example, Genevieve Lloyd, "The Man of Reason" and Alison M. Jaggar, "Love and Knowledge: Emotion in Feminist Epistemology," in Ann Garry and Marilyn Pearsall (eds.), *Women, Knowledge, and Reality:*

Explorations in Feminist Philosophy (London, New York: Routledge, 1989), 149–65, and 166–90.

79. See Pateman, *Sexual Contract*, 36f. The first modern writer to raise explicitly the issue of the nonagency of women was Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex*, H. M. Parshley (trans.) (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975).

80. See, Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Private Man, Public Woman: Women in Social and Political Thought* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981); Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Cambridge: Polity, and Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), and *The Disorder of Women: Democracy, Feminism, and Political Theory* (Cambridge: Polity, 1989); Susan Moller Okin, *Justice, Gender, and the Family* (New York: Basic, 1989). The historical process of exclusion of women because of their lack of fit with male-derived models of rationality and agency has been an important theme in the work of Italian feminists which emerged out of the the radical Italian feminist movement of the 1970s. See Adriana Cavarero "Equality and Sexual Difference: Amnesia in Political Thought," in Bock and James, *Beyond Equality and Difference*, 32–47.

81. Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, 156.

82. Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, 17. More recently, Gilligan has sought to dissociate the model of care from specific gender implications. See C. Gilligan and G. Wiggins, "The Origins of Morality in Early Childhood Relationships," in J. Kegan and S. Launch (eds), *The Emergence of Morality in Young Children* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987).

83. Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, 102.

84. Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, 32, 35, xxi, 22.

85. See especially the contrast Gilligan draws between Mary McCarthy's *Memories of a Catholic Childhood*, in which the author explains that she often had to compromise and to equivocate "in the interests of the community" and the morally assertive stance described in James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, in which the hero defiantly stands up for his beliefs. Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, 157–58.

86. In her "Letter to the Readers" included in the second edition of *In a Different Voice*, and also in "Remapping the Moral Domain: New Images of the Self in Relationship," in Claudia Zanardi (ed.), *Essential Papers on the Psychology of Women* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1990), 480–95, Gilligan suggests that the voices of women reveal a conflict between a readily identifiable "created or socially constructed voice" and an authentic voice which women "hear as their own" (xvii). However, her account in the book

itself of the different sorts of conflict audible in women's voices does not bear out this claim. What is at issue is not a conflict between an authentic voice of care and a social voice of "justice," but *different* sorts of conflicts, which sometimes result from the attempt to find one's place within available social models of interaction and sometimes from a refusal to accept a course of action unreflectively in genuinely complex moral situations.

87. Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, 74, emphasis added.

88. Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, xxi, emphasis added.

89. A powerful version of this criticism can be found in Iris Murdoch's "The Sovereignty of Good" in *The Sovereignty of Good and Other Essays* (London: Routledge, 1997).

90. Beiser, *Enlightenment, Revolution, and Romanticism*, 4.

91. Rorty, "Pragmatism, Relativism, Irrationality," in *Consequences of Pragmatism*, 161.

92. P. F. Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment," 60; John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 8, 43, also "Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical," in *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 14:3 (1985), 223–51; Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 1 (Boston: Beacon, 1971), 138, and again 392; also Habermas, "Discourse Ethics: Notes on a Program of Philosophical Justification," in *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, Christian Lenhardt and Shierry Weber Nicholsen (trans.) (Cambridge: Polity, 1990), 43–115.

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